

Interview with Richard A. Dwyer

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

RICHARD A. DWYER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: July 12, 1990

Copyright 1998 ADST

Q: This is an interview with Richard A. Dwyer. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy and this is being done on behalf of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program. I wonder if you could tell me a bit about your background. Where did you come from?

DWYER: I was born in Chicago, the suburbs of Chicago, and raised in a small town in Indiana, Michigan City, about 50 miles outside of Chicago. I went to public high school in Michigan City, and had four years of college at Dartmouth and then a couple of years at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton for an MPA and then directly into the Foreign Service—interrupted briefly by the army and then back.

Q: Did you get any overseas in the army?

DWYER: No, none whatsoever.

Q: How did you become interested in foreign affairs?

DWYER: I had been interested in foreign affairs all through high school. I had participated in several mock United Nations conferences sponsored by, I can't think who now, I guess the Rotary or some service club in Cincinnati. I had gone to summer school at the

Library of Congress

University of Geneva after graduating from high school, and I spent a summer working in the vineyards in Burgundy while I was in college. I had always intended to do that. My father had a manufacturing business and I had two older brothers. I certainly did not want to be the youngest brother in that. I was the youngest child, actually. I had looked at three or four different things. The CIA, which I found not to my taste, not that I really knew much about it because as I recall the interviewer at graduate school said we won't tell you what you do until after we hire you. The only real runner up to the Foreign Service was what was then the Office of the Budget, which was in the mid-50's a very attractive place with a lot of interesting people, high-powered young people, but I think the travel in the Foreign Service and the world at large were the main things. I took the exam in the Spring of my first year at Princeton.

Q: This was when you were at the Woodrow Wilson School?

DWYER: Yes, the Woodrow Wilson School was a two-year and a summer program for a Masters in Public Affairs designed specifically at that time for people who were not going on to academic life. At that time I think we had about 15 people in my class at the graduate school. Now that I think about it was 1956 that I took the exam because I remember vividly that a couple of people flunked out but came into the Foreign Service by being promoted when the Wristonization people...

Q: This was the three and a half day exam wasn't it?

DWYER: Yes, I guess it was—no, I don't think it was. I only remember a day's exam. It was extra long because they inadvertently gave us the civil service exam first and when we were done with it they apologized and said, "You that the wrong exam. Do you want to wait until the next time it is given or shall we start at it now?" So we started at it "now." It was a long, long day. It seemed like three days, I must say.

Q: I have here that you came in in 1958, was that right?

Library of Congress

DWYER: No, not quite. I came in in August, 1957 and had the basic training course and then went on leave to go into the army for six months as a reserve and then I came back in August of '58 so in effect I did begin in 1958.

Q: In 1958 your first assignment was where?

DWYER: To the Office of Functional and Biographic Intelligence as a Class 8, executive assistant to the Office Director. At the time it was the largest office in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research largely because it still had the biographic record keeping function, but a few years later it was given over to the Agency.

Q: What were you doing mainly?

DWYER: My job was basically a staff aide job. I ran the office for the Office Director. Helped his secretaries schedule his meetings, read his mail and sorted it for him and tried to separate what was important from what was not. Basically a general helpmate including stealing a davenport from another office.

Q: Who was Director of the Office?

DWYER: Well, it was one of the very many Johnsons. Richard A. Johnson who had been Deputy Chief of Mission in Madrid and he came back to be Director of the Office. He had spent a large part of his career in Latin America and Spain.

Q: Did you get any feel, I mean this is your first time looking at the organization, of the role INR played there, did you feel you were off in a obscure corner or did you feel that you were involved in things, or at least your office was involved in things?

DWYER: Well, I didn't feel that I was off in an obscure corner, I KNEW I was off in an obscure corner. But the whole Bureau at that time, and probably largely still, is a somewhat obscure part of the Department of State. At that time, however, I think of my

Library of Congress

entering class—20 or 30 people—there were no more than one or two that were assigned overseas because of the integration of the civil service.

Q: This is the Wriston program?

DWYER: The Wristonization had largely filled up the overseas slots and I actually considered myself lucky because it was an interesting job and I had several of my classmates who were assigned to the passport offices. One poor fellow from El Paso who I think had joined the Foreign Service to get away from a mother-in-law, found himself back in El Paso, or wherever it was, issuing passports to all his friends who went to Europe on occasion.

Q: Well, your first overseas assignment was to Damascus in 1960 where you served until 1963.

DWYER: Yes.

Q: How did that come about?

DWYER: Well, inadvertently, I must say. There was a brief assignment between. I had a chance to work on the Antarctic Treaty program for the duration of the Antarctic Treaty until early 1960. It was very interesting. One of the few real world treaty conferences that wasn't under the auspice of the United Nations and it was a great experience.

I had naively requested a French speaking post. Personnel decided that Saigon would be a nice place for me. I was not too keen on Saigon and to my surprise they came up with Damascus which never entered my mind. I was thinking of Algeria or Morocco. They needed someone in Damascus badly because my predecessor had resigned mid-tour and went home so it was one of those things that if you can go tomorrow you can have it. So, we left.

Library of Congress

Q: What was the situation in Syria at that time? We are talking about the early 1960s.

DWYER: Syria at that time was still part of the United Arab Republic which consisted of Syria and Egypt. I can't recall now, but at one point there was Yemen in there.

Q: It was always coming in and out.

DWYER: Yes, yes, they were sewing stars on the flag and taking them off. In fact it was a fascinating time to be there. A year after we got there on September 28, 1961, as I recall, the Syrians in effect revolted and Syria became an independent country again. For a period of another year and a half or so, Syria had a more or less democratic government for the last time since the Baaths took over in 1963. So you had, unfortunately a series of governments that were trying to find their way, but for a junior officer on a first assignment this country was a great place to be. You knew people. As a third secretary I had friends in the cabinet, almost unheard of in other countries at that level. Of course the cabinet kept changing all the time, so sooner or later you knew most everybody.

Q: I assume this was a fairly small embassy.

DWYER: Yes, it was. When I arrived it was a consulate general which it had become upon the union of Syria and Egypt. We had a consulate general in Damascus which had formerly been the embassy and another consulate general in Aleppo. The staff in Damascus included myself, the junior officer as economic/commercial officer, three or four political officers, a couple of which were with the Agency, a consular section and administrative section, and a small AID group plus a military attach# office.

Q: How did you find the hand of Egypt at that time? There was this sort of peculiar union at the height of Nasserism and all that, but what was the consulate general's impression of this union?

Library of Congress

DWYER: Well, it was still getting it's feet on the ground and it still was not working. The vice president, General Omer [ph], was an Egyptian and he was rather the viceroy. As a matter of fact he lived across the street from us which was the cause of everybody's car getting shot up but mine when the separation came. Basically the Syrians have been divided ethnically and geographically by the French under the mandate in the '20s and for quite a while before had never really had a country with real borders. The Baaths and the Ban [ph] Arabs considered greater Syria to run from the Nile over to Baghdad and most certainly including Beirut and all of Lebanon to say nothing of the lower part of Turkey that the French had given away in the '30s to make amends with the Turks. They had therefore the Druses in the south, the Alawites which the current President is from, and all kinds of minorities. The problem was that the most radical proposals drove out almost anything of any moderation. You could not be a Syrian politician at that time or probably even today and not be radically anti-Israeli, of course, because this would expose your party or group to the people who were even more radical. So therefore even though there were surprisingly many good people in the government—by good people I mean competent technicians that were looking towards the economic development of the country rather than the political aggrandizement of it—their voice was pretty much stifled through that whole period. After the country again became independent and in the interval, I must say, and after that we went through a dozen or eighteen coup d'etats and attempted coup d'etats, it was a regular occurrence, there were a succession of governments that never really managed to get a hold...

Q: This was after the ending of the....

DWYER: Yes, and even before there were a couple of bootleg attempts at coups that failed. I remember a birthday party at Les Polk's [ph] house...

Q: Les Polk being...?

Library of Congress

DWYER: Les Polk was my immediate superior who became the senior economic/commercial officer after I had been there for a few months. Les was an Arabic specialist and spoke beautiful French. He had been in the army during the Second World War—a captain so he was a little older than the average. He was also a little unusual in that he was black—there were very few black officers in...

Q: He had been in Saudi Arabia before that...

DWYER: That is correct. He was quite a character. In any event, Les' eldest child had a birthday and was the same age as our girl, or a little older. So all the children were at that birthday party together with one of the grandmas visiting from the States when one of the coups came along. The standard procedure there was to gather the family—there were hardly any houses in Damascus as nearly everyone lived in apartments—and usually go into the kitchen since it was generally in the center of the apartment and there were fewer windows there. After the coup had been going for some time, the grandmother from the States told all the children that these were fireworks in connection with the child's birthday. I was one of the few who could get away easily from where I was and I dropped over to make sure that everybody was all right because we were immediately under curfew. My daughter came up to me and said, "Daddy don't tell grandma X there is a coup on. She thinks it is for the birthday." I think I had the only 3 year old who could tell the difference between a 35mm and 50mm machine gun.

Q: Well now, what were American interests in Syria at that time?

DWYER: Well, they probably were pretty much the same as they are today. The political situation in some ways and indeed the environment has changed remarkably little over the odd years. Our primary client then as now was Israel. In the early '60s we could make, perhaps, a little bit more of a case that the United States was attempting to be neutral in Arab-Israeli affairs. Secondly, since the '56 war, there had been no French embassy in Damascus or British embassy there. And in the '60s still...

Library of Congress

Q: The '56 war was the Suez Crisis.

DWYER: Suez Crisis, that's right. And in the '60s the French and British were still major players. As a matter of fact, certainly the French still are today. The French traditionally served as protector of Christian interests in Lebanon—all Syrians then and I suppose now still consider Lebanon as part of greater Syria. I think probably we were playing a little more of a role because of the absence of the French and the British until 1961 or 2, I forget when they came back. Beyond that we had the oil pipelines...

Q: Tapline.

DWYER: Tapline, precisely. It had been cut off by the first war of Israeli independence and there was still hopes at that time that that might be reopened. We had the same interests then as we do now. The hope is that Syria might itself be sufficiently stable so that it might play a stabilizing role in the area being the country where internationally as domestically the most radical government was the one that achieved popular support for a brief period. I refer to it as democratic governments, but they certainly were not democratic governments in any sense we knew or know now, but they were democratic in the sense that until the Baath took over there was a kind of live and let live attitude toward political turmoil. If you were a colonel and didn't make brigadier you tried for president or prime minister and if missed, nothing too bad happened to you. Usually you were made military attach# somewhere depending on the quality of the coup you attempted. After the Baath came in, particularly the hardline wing of the Baath, you stood a pretty good chance of being stood against the wall and shot.

Q: When did the Baath come in? Were you there at that time?

DWYER: Yes. It was in August of 1963. As a matter of fact we were growing suspicious, I think it may have been August 18 or 28, every coup seemed to happen on a date with an

Library of Congress

eight in it. Anyway it was about that time. After I left to go to Egypt, Assad finally achieved power as an Alawite and remarkably enough has stayed in power until today.

Q: Do you know or have a feel for how we viewed the Baath party before they took over and at the time of the coup that brought them to power?

DWYER: Well, there were two major wings of the Baath party—Oh, golly, I should have gone over all the names...

Q: Actually, we can add the names.

DWYER: The principal founder of the Baath party fled to exile in Eastern Europe, I think Bulgaria, for quite a while. You had then the Baath supported by the Iraqi Baath party that had come in and these two wings of the Baath party were different. I left Syria in the Fall of '63 so it was only a couple of months after the Baaths had come in. I don't think that we had any particular feeling for the Baath as a whole, except generically. We didn't like radical socialists and we didn't like people who might come back to power from Eastern Europe. Beyond the coterie of Arabists in the State Department whose influence was not particularly great, I think, in the overall aspects of American foreign policy in those years, there wasn't much of anyone, I would guess, who knew much about them or cared greatly.

Q: You mentioned the Arabists in the Department of State in the "60s. You were not really from this particular world, I mean this was your first look at it. Was this a different breed of cat, I'm talking about the Foreign Service Officers who could be called Arabists?

DWYER: To some extent it was. The Arabists in the State Department are not in the same category as the British nomads of the desert to the people who fell in love with the Sheik to the south, although we had a few of those too. But basically the main thing, I suppose, that characterized the Arabists of that time was the fact that since the Suez War, the '56 war, there have been a large number of embassy and post closings and there were a lot of people with a great deal of time and career invested in the language and in the area who

Library of Congress

were looking for jobs. Beyond that, at the post itself, we really had only two or three people who would describe themselves as real Arabists. Curt Jones, the head of the political section, was certainly one of those. He spoke good Arabic, as the Arabs say, he speaks Arabic-like words. In the station there was one officer married to an Lebanese woman, whose Arabic was pretty good and...

Q: Was that Archie Roosevelt?

DWYER: No, Roosevelt was a few years before. As a matter of fact I occupied his office and the local employees always delighted in showing me where the Israelis strafed it. We still had a bullet mark or a fragmentation bomb, or something like that. Actually, Roosevelt's ties were not unknown and even then... We had a remarkably good military attach# whose name I can't think of at the moment, but he did more and better work as a military attach# than almost any one of the breed that I have encountered since. When I left Damascus and went over to Cairo, where we had a military attach# office of 60-odd people, and 27 accredited attach#s, the whole bunch of them could not begin to turn out the work that the guy in Syria could with a sergeant and a lieutenant.

Q: What was the feeling towards Israel? The attitude of the Embassy and your attitude at that time. This was before our major commitment to Israel which came after the '67 war. But obviously they were our principal beneficiary in the Middle East, I suppose.

DWYER: I should say again that this was my first assignment, brand new right out of graduate school, not terribly sophisticated, and perhaps overly idealistic. I guess I should preface it by saying that I ended up spending three years there in my first assignment which from a career standpoint was probably a mistake, but I had been asked to do so and as a result I had probably a better grasp of the community than most of the Embassy did who were changing at eighteen months and two years. I still thought at the time that we could still be even handed in our foreign policy. By even handed I mean that Israel would not be as much as a favored part of our foreign policy as it became.

Library of Congress

I felt at the time and to some extent still do that if it were not for Israel, the Arabs would have had to invent one. It gave the disparate political and ethnic Arab groups something to unite against—about the only thing they had. My Arab friends, as an economic officer, were extremely shortsighted economically if they didn't have a fifty percent profit in six months they were not interested in it. But politically, even then, they remembered that the Kingdom of Jerusalem had lasted only a hundred years and the Arabs were patient and there were a great many more Arabs than Israelis and it might take another hundred years—mind you this was in the 1960s—but eventually that territory would become Arab once more.

I think that undoubtedly the refugee problem was the greatest difficulty. The Palestinians in Syria had been in refugee camps for 13 years or so and it is hard to believe they are still there today. But at that time in the '60s the Palestinians, as they were called and called themselves, in general were a more sophisticated, better educated group of people than the average Syrian. They were also, thanks to the British Mandate, more western-American-British oriented than the Syrians who had never been under the British Mandate. And they offered a pool of experience and talent that, unfortunately, was not used to the extent it might have been. Even now, looking back when I think of my Syrian or Palestinians friends, the entrepreneurs were Palestinians—the guy who built the match factory. Except for the traditional upper class Syrians, the middle and lower class Palestinians were probably better trained and educated. I presume that in the last 30 years that it has been largely dissipated now.

Q: I would imagine so. In the camps they wouldn't be getting the feed back.

DWYER: And most of them got out. I don't know if we ever could have put enough pressure on the Syrians and the other Arabs to assimilate the Palestinians. It was politically impossible, of course, because to do so would have meant that they accepted the state of Israel. Nonetheless, still I have often thought that something could have been worked out even if they just gave them citizenship and maintain their Palestinian

Library of Congress

citizenship or something like that. But for political reasons it was a tool as was Israel. Things could still be worked out.

My wife was pregnant when we got there. We were very naive and idealistic at that time. I would never years later after I became more experienced have taken a pregnant young woman out of the United States for the first time to Syria. But there was the American University hospital in Beirut and we were told that this was superb. But it turned out we wished we had stayed in Damascus and used a Damascian doctor who trained in Cleveland. We would have been much better off than with the American doctor in Beirut. The baby was due in January, and it was decided that the best thing to do was for my wife to go over early and have labor induced. We were getting a little antsy because we thought the doctor was leaving this a little bit late. There were no modern hospital facilities in Damascus.

When the time was due to go, the passes were closed with snow and there was no way that we could drive over and the airline said they wouldn't take her, and it probably wouldn't have been a good idea to fly out anyway. So through friends in the government and the foreign office and in the military we arranged for Sally and myself to be able to drive down through southern Syria and southern Lebanon, which was a closed military zone, and of course we also needed the okay from the Israelis. All of which we got with remarkably little effort. I'm very fond of the Syrian people there, they just couldn't have been nicer.

We drove over on a cold January morning, across the mountains and down the Bekaa Valley to Marjayoun in the south on roads that hadn't seen civilian traffic since the war of independence and were nothing but potholes, you know, where tracked vehicles had been over it. We saw a part of the border area there that we otherwise would not have seen. Then we hit the coast and drove back up to Beirut. But such things were possible then. A couple of years later when the Baaths came in that was unheard of.

Library of Congress

Q: What was the feeling about, I want to say quote the Soviet menace?

DWYER: Well, it was very real. I managed to get a whole issue of a newspaper confiscated by the Syrian government one time, thanks to an interview I gave to a Lebanese journalist, typical Foreign Service officer prejudice being built early against journalists. But in fact, except for the fact that he quoted an embassy officer as a source and the whole of Syria knew who it was, I didn't have any real complaint. What he quoted was my statement that at the time on a per capita basis Syria was getting more Soviet aid than any other country in the world—which was quite true. But this did not make the Syrian government happy—a few years later they would not have minded, but at that time they did. They grabbed every copy of the newspaper in town, called the Ambassador in and said would you shut Dwyer up, please—and told me to shut up too. In effect, the Soviets main contribution was military. That was what we were particularly interested in in a particularly backhanded way I sometimes thought. I can remember, I have movies of the Syrian independence day where 6 MiGs overflowed it and we didn't know that they had six MiGs.

Q: MiGs being a Soviet type plane.

DWYER: Yes, the Soviet fighter of the day. I don't know what they were—19 or something, anyway the new model. And we didn't know they had these new models or at least that they had as many as six. This was of interest to Washington. I reported it and the military attach# reported it, and the Station chief reported it, I suppose. A few months later when the annual agency report on the military establishments came out they had them down as three. I sent a wire in saying what is this we saw six. We got a wire back saying they had two reports, one saying they had none and one saying they had six so we gave them three.

This was one of our major interests—it certainly was one of the major interests of the Agency at that time. The Soviet embassy had an enormous KGB contingent, and at one

Library of Congress

time kidnapped one of our Embassy officers, shot him full of drugs and pumped him for what he knew, and fortunately released him unharmed—well, they beat him up pretty badly but at least he came back, which was obviously rare. Nothing great was made about it publicly, of course, but it was indicative of the competition or the conflict.

We had another instance where a good friend of mine, Fairham Atassi [ph], who was an American citizen and Syrian citizen, and he was a businessman, a young man, our age, a junior officer age, so he was a good friend of all the junior officers. His wife was of Syrian extraction but born in New York. He had a couple of grandiose projects including building the railroad that Lawrence had destroyed all the way back to Mecca...

Q: The Hejaz railway.

DWYER: The Hejaz railway, which never has been rebuilt. Brown construction company was interested in this and a few other things. Anyway he was a member of a very prominent Syrian family. The Atassis were—there was a cousin who was a prime minister at that time. Fairham presumed he was immune from any serious repercussions from his actions because of his American citizenship, although I personally told him he was not, because of his Syrian citizenship, and so did the consular officer. Anyway he was alleged to have been recruited by the Agency and although I went on record early on and so did a couple of others, saying that this was a man who was not stable, he drank too much, he talked too much. After a few drinks he grew very expansive. And furthermore he was on the very fringes of his family. In any event he was alleged to have been recruited as an American spy and a few months after I left Syria, he had been charged before I left I think, he was taken out and hung in the public square. I forget what minister it was, the Minister of Public Work or something, happened to have an office overlooking the square and on some pretext had requested the American Ambassador to call upon him and out his window was Fairham Atassi's body.

Library of Congress

Obviously by that time our relations with Syria were pretty much at the breaking point. Our Ambassador at that time, Ridgway Knight, was quoted in Time magazine—he was asked by Time why he was not more outspoken on these questions and he said very succinctly, “I learned early in my Foreign Service career you do not get into fighting matches with skunks.”

I left Syria in the Fall of '63 and the cordial relations of the Embassy with the Syrian government ended shortly thereafter—certainly with the hanging of Fairham and his wife and children were later spirited over the border and back into the United States. It always was not only a sad and bitter memory to me because I liked Fairham and we saw him fairly frequently, but it always seemed to me a case of the people who are responsible for and train in the art of covert activities get very frustrated when they have nothing to do. They tend to try to put some of their spy craft in operation often losing sight of the over all objectives of American foreign policy which in the long scheme of things many of these minor operations produce no historic benefit to speak of but are capable of producing an historic embarrassment to no good end.

Q: Now you were a direct transfer to Cairo?

DWYER: Yes. I had had an assignment to Casablanca at the end of two years which sounded real good to me. That's where I originally was interested in going. Ridgway Knight, our Ambassador in Syria, of whom I was, and still am, very, very fond, called me in and said, “Dick, I know you want this assignment, but I have interviewed your replacement and I don't think he is the man for the job and I would like you to stay on for another year. I will see that you get a good job.” I was young enough and naive enough to think that ambassadors could actually do that. I did stay on for another year and when the time came to transfer I was in effect handed by Ambassador Knight to his good friend the Deputy Chief of Mission over in Cairo who was looking for a staff aide for the ambassador. This came as a surprise to me because my wife and I had just spent two weeks of our leave traveling throughout Egypt never knowing when we were going to get back to the Middle

Library of Congress

East again. I had also considered and decided against Arabic language training and here I found myself right back in the area, just across the river in Egypt.

At that time John Badeau was our Ambassador in Egypt, a Kennedy appointee who had some thirty years in the Arabic world. He had been president of the American University in Cairo, was an engineer and minister. His Deputy at the time was Bill Boswell, who had come from a job as head of some office in security. The embassies were totally different in the sense that Embassy Damascus was—well, when we first got to Damascus it was a miserable post, people weren't talking to each other. We were there in a hotel room, my wife pregnant, and it was six weeks before anyone invited us out for a drink, dinner, or anything else. Finally the Station Chief took us under his wing and then fortunately the Chief of Mission, who was a bit of an alcoholic and I think a large part of the problem, was transferred and it became an excellent post with everyone working together. A true country team with all agencies getting along well. Everyone felt they were doing something.

To go from a small embassy like Damascus into Cairo which was 350-400 people at the time—enormous to my eyes—was quite a change. Of course there was none of the family feeling of the small embassy in the big one. But Bill Boswell wanted an office manager and he being a good friend of my ambassador in Cairo I was handed over. It was a fascinating three years in Cairo as staff aide, executive assistant, or whatever title I held [there were several]. It was kind of fun because in the ambassadorial area there were only myself and the Minister and the secretaries of the Ambassador, Minister and myself, and an Egyptian social secretary. So being next to the source of power was almost like being there—I tried to remember none of the power really was mine! The reverse side of the coin was that I had no real work of my own to do that took me out into the Egyptian community. As a matter of fact, I had to be very careful about my contacts, not only with the Egyptians but with the enormous press corps we had there. Rick Smith, was head of the New York Times bureau and a terribly persistent person. The aide was always the target for all

Library of Congress

these people if they couldn't get in to see the Ambassador or the Minister. But it was very interesting.

John Badeau pretty much ignored the rest of the world and most of his Embassy. He dealt with Gamal Abdel Nasser. When he was leaving and we were waiting for a new ambassador I compiled a book for the new ambassador that consisted of the forty-odd conversations that Badeau had had with Gamal Abdel Nasser. I indexed them by topics, etc. It was kind of like a joke because he would go down and say to Nasser, "The American policy is this," and Nasser would respond with something like the famous convention, the comedians, you could give the numbers, go in and say "42" and Nasser would say "46." But Nasser was completely accessible to Ambassador Badeau for most of the time. I wonder what ever happened to the book?

Ambassador Badeau and his wife were older than the average. They had no interest, whatsoever, in the local diplomatic corps which was 120 members. He felt, quite rightly I think, that he wasn't there to talk with the other diplomats, which meant his DCM was saddled with that. Not a terribly unpleasant responsibility, but still, if he were not an Arabist, why he was less interested in the inner workings of the Arab world than were the political section or economic section.

We had an enormous AID program. We had eight people tripping over each other and us. We had these 50-odd people in the military attach# office, two airplanes plus a military air transport office, plus a navy medical research unit that had been there since '46 and even stayed after the '67 war.

Q: That was when technically our Embassy closed down but we kept what amounted to an Interest Section.

DWYER: Well, I will say we saw it coming and I still have framed somewhere, or at least on a scroll, my exequatur as a consular officer because the Ambassador looked rattled and his political officer, Don Burgess, said, "Let's make everybody that you might want

Library of Congress

to stay a consular officer as well as diplomatic officers so that if we all get kicked out we can stay as consular officers." It didn't work, they kicked them all out anyway. I think that Don Burgess had in mind that he was going to end up as head of an American Interest Section somewhere, but unfortunately he did not. Interestingly enough about the same time I think I finally got promoted. We got there in November of '63 and President Kennedy was assassinated shortly after we arrived and I have the commissions appointing me as a consular officer in addition to a secretary because of this request for the exequatur, signed purportedly by Lyndon Johnson ten days before Kennedy was assassinated.

Q: What was your impression and maybe others in the Embassy you were talking to, of the effectiveness of Badeau as an ambassador, or the influence of the United States in Egypt on Nasser at that time?

DWYER: Well, what leverage we had was in large part dependent on foreign aid and, of course, the Aswan Dam was the most obvious example there. But I felt then and I have often felt since that Washington, the Congress and even the Department of State didn't seem to realize that this is a coin that can only be spent once. You can't continually threaten taking it away because if you do why it is crying wolf and nobody will believe you. If you do so, why then what do you do as a follow-up?

Our AID program at that time was, as I said, highly extensive and interestingly enough there was a program started under Bill Crockett in the Department of State at the time and which was an attempt to organize the Department, and particularly the overseas embassies tightly along the lines of American policy interests. In other words, we have x number of dollars...and this was also thanks to the Kennedy letter giving the ambassador much more formal authority than ever before in running his embassy. The idea was working through the embassies rather than the Department where the ambassadors did have this Executive Order and letter from the President we might be better able to tailor our resources overseas, than we could directly from Washington. The Department of State in Washington could not then, and still can not, influence as much as it thinks

Library of Congress

it should the activities of the other agencies abroad and of course the Department's philosophy has always been if you can get someone else to pay for it we don't care how many people you have. Anyway, as part of this there came to be a program where, on an experimental basis, each embassy was assigned resources which would include one executive assistant and a secretary who would run this experimental program in embassies around the world.

By this time Luc Battle was the ambassador and he was an excellent intra-Departmental politician, having been Executive Secretary of the Department and an Assistant Secretary before he came out there. The Department had a few secrets as to how it worked. He said, "What do you think about this executive assistant, what shall we do about it? Shall we refuse it or—I'm not sure I can easily refuse it or even should I?" And my feeling was let's take it as long as I'm it—because as aide to the ambassador I really didn't want an executive assistant there—and I said furthermore it comes with a secretary and we never have enough secretaries. So that is what we did. This program consisted of requesting, if you can imagine such a thing, the 350 people to keep track of their day in 15-minute segments as to what they did. We had space for going to the john and space for unlocking safes in the morning and the whole bit. There were interviews. I don't know if we interviewed them all, but we had a team come out from Washington to do this—a half a dozen people. I think we interviewed almost everybody of a substantial nature in the Department of State, I don't know if we got down to the well diggers or not. Probably not the technicians in AID, but most everybody else.

The idea was to compare this survey with a country policy paper that was to be drafted first by the Embassy. The Embassy was, I think in our case, to write the first draft of what American policy should be towards Egypt. Then this policy paper would go back to Washington where it would be approved on an interagency level. It would come back to the field and after all the information of a couple of weeks work of what people actually did, these duties would be assigned to policy topics by me or by the team. Then we would try to see if we were spending our resources in the correct manner. We evaluated all

Library of Congress

resources in terms of time and money. Time was people, and money was obviously money and projects.

There was a tremendous amount of money spent on this thing. It went around the world. I don't know how many embassies were doing this. Of course, it ran into every kind of prejudice that old line Foreign Service Officers ever had. But Luc Battle was perhaps unusual in that he said, "Go ahead and do it. I will support the project and try to go along with it completely."

The Station Chief took me aside out to lunch one day, which he normally did not do, and we had a few drinks and he said, "You know you are not going to really ask what all my resources are out there." And I said, "Yes, we are not making substantive judgments on what they do, but the Ambassador does want to do it." He said, "I will give you some numbers, but you know Dick..." I said, "Luc Battle said he is going to do this so we can go on." I think the Station Chief was amazed when the final thing came through and said we had too many people here as far as the Ambassador was concerned. He said, "They are not contributing to my carrying out of American foreign policy. That is not to say that they do not have missions on a global area, for example, of Soviet interests and penetration that are completely separate from American-Egyptian interests. But as far as American-Egyptian interests are concerned, why we can do with something about half this size"—which made me very popular with the Station Chief. Even less popular with the military attach# office where the Ambassador thought two or three would do nicely, thank you. I will say we had at that time a couple of senior military officers there who had personal problems and did not give much leadership to their staff. We also had some very good professional junior military officers that did a superb job including Gary Siolc, who later became famous as the White House man on Iran.

Q: Iran, yes.

Library of Congress

DWYER: While we had a number of good professional intelligence people we had an awful lot of support people out there maintaining these people in a style they would like to become accustomed. We even found people we didn't know we had. There was one guy who had been there forever and I always assumed he worked for the Agency and the Agency finally said, "He doesn't work for us". I said, "Are you sure, I don't want to step on any toes"? He said, "He was a political officer". I said, "He is not a political officer, he has an office downtown." It turned out that he worked for the Library of Congress buying books. Everybody had presumed he had been working for Langley for fifteen years, including, I am sure, the Egyptians.

So when it came time to cut back, the poor guy lost his job and was replaced by an Egyptian. Anyway, the moral of the story, and I am digressing too much, is what actually happened was that the agencies couldn't agree on a policy towards Egypt. We could not and did not ever have a policy paper that could gain acceptance in Washington. The summation of this was that it was agreed that everybody would continue to go on doing their own thing. As before, you didn't rock the boat as long as these other agencies didn't get in your way. We did manage to cut back in a few slots, purely because of budgetary reasons, but as far as the whole idea of having a policy and directing your resources towards it, that did not work.

Political officer, Don Burgess, had always felt for a long time that there were approximately 50 people in Egypt that it was important to know—these were Nasser's inner circle. Under Nasser and indeed, I suppose, under Sadat, too, and probably now, the Foreign Office, well maybe it has changed in 30 years, but the Foreign Office in those days was composed of people who had still been educated under Farouk or at least in the old line British tradition of a Foreign Office, but the fact of the matter is that they had very little influence on foreign policy.

Library of Congress

Q: This is so often the case in many countries. The Foreign Ministry or Foreign Office is just an...it handles the very technical things but other than that...

DWYER: It did the necessary as far as the support of the Embassy was concern and when we got into a brew-ha-ha about buying a new Embassy residence even there they were of little or no help. We rented a Victorian manse in Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo, for the American Ambassador which was badly suited for Embassy needs. It was enormous and had 4 or 5 bedrooms. It was in the middle of town, a couple of blocks from Independence Square where the mobs could stop in on their way to assemble or disassemble and had really nothing to recommend it.

We had literally millions and millions of Egyptian pounds. Luc Battle found a house on the other side of the river that was a lovely place and ran from the river back to the main road going out to the pyramids—in other words, a whole block that had been owned by one of the early prominent politicians of Egypt and his wife, who was a French woman. She was now elderly and still living on the property. She was quite agreeable to selling the property to the United States after her death. We had a fairly sharp general services officer and admin officer and I must say the poor old lady was probably not even cold before the property was signed, sealed and delivered to the American government. This absolutely outraged, I guess it was the Minister of Labor who had his eye on this property. We ran the American flag up the flag pole, the militia came in and tore it down and we ran it up again, etc.

Finally, after Nasser's death, Sadat had decided he wanted it as his personal residence and we agreed as you pretty well must with the president of a country that we would give it to him for exchange of another property of equal value and location—which, of course, we never got. In the interval the Egyptians demolished the lovely Georgian type house that was on the property and Sadat decided he didn't want to live there anyway as it was too close to the university, so he gave us back the property but it no longer had the house. I

Library of Congress

think we may have finally built on it, but it was a typical tarantula and the frog crossing the river...

Q: This was before the major war, '67 war, but what was the view of Israel and what we were doing there from our Embassy in Cairo at that time.

DWYER: I don't know whether I could say that the Embassy had a view in that sense. Certainly the traditional career officers who were specialists in the Arab world were attempting to fight what was even then recognized as a defensive battle against giving too much away for free to the Israelis. As a matter of fact that was one of the reasons, the question of Israeli politics, that Luc Battle came out as Ambassador. He had previously been Assistant Secretary for Cultural Affairs and therefore he was acceptable to both sides—the Israeli and Arab.

He almost didn't make it because we got the request for the agreement in the middle of the night [these things come in under the Agreement Channel and my job consisted of getting up in the middle of the night and going in to see all of these highly classified things that Washington would send out in the middle of the night because no ambassador or minister was going to take more than a month of coming in in the middle of the night before they handed the job over to me. Ninety-nine percent of it was, of course, absolutely useless and there was nothing you could do anyway in the middle of the night.] I got the request at 3:00 in the morning and looked at it—we had been expecting something so I didn't know whether to get Bill Boswell out of bed or not. So I compromised and called him and told him we got the message we had been looking for. I said that there was nothing we could do about it now. He said, "Well, I would kind of like to know so, would you bring it over on your way home." Which I did. We talked about this new man Battle and looked him up in the Stud Book and discovered that neither of us knew much about him.

Q: Stud Book I might add is the Biographic Register.

Library of Congress

DWYER: I went home and he went to bed. At about 4:30 in the morning I got another call and I go into the Embassy and a cable in the Agr#ment Channel says to take no action on the first message. I sat there saying to myself, "Is there any way that Boswell could mention this to someone—on his way in to work might he meet the Foreign Minister or somebody—maybe I had better call." So I called him and said, "Bill, don't take any action on this, we got a telegram in." He said, "What does it say?" I said, "It just says to take no action on our previous telegram." He said, "Let's see it." So I went by.

To make it short, Senator Fulbright had decided that Luc Battle had been the only decent Assistant Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs that had ever come along and far superior to anyone likely to be there and he thought that was important. He felt Luc Battle would foul up his career if he went out and got involved between the Israelis and Arabs. According to Luc, he told me afterwards, Fulbright was trying to do him a favor by holding up his appointment—but he sure had us going around in the middle of the night.

Anyway, as far as Israeli policy was concerned, or Arab policy was concerned, Battle, as I say, was chosen, at least in part, because of his independence from both sides. Cairo, in those days before the recognition of Israel, was still very much the leader of the Arab world. It had an enormous film industry. The Egyptian dialect was almost a lingua franca in inter-Arab media and Egypt had a powerful influence culturally and historically on the rest of the Arab world which was one of the reasons why we had the extensive staff in USIA and the Library of Congress and Agriculture and everybody else out there. So that was important to us to influence, I suppose, to the extent we could. They burned the library down around our ears one Thanksgiving morning so I don't know how much influence our cultural activities had there, but certainly this was a point.

The years have gone by too fast for me to remember what in the '60s we were specifically trying to achieve. I think one primary objective concerned irrigation from the Jordan River, for example. While I was in Egypt, my wife and I decided we had to take a look at Israel after this many years in the Arab world so we went over and spent 2 # weeks there. I think

Library of Congress

we put something like 3000 miles on the car and Israel is not a very big country. I don't know many roads that we missed. But we couldn't find the Jordan River. We were at the Sea of Galilee, going all around it, did it twice. Finally I realized that this little trickle going under a bridge that looked like something that went across a golf course stream at home was the Jordan River. It was incredible that we had been spending so much time on what amount of water we were going to allocate between Jordan and Israel.

Beyond that when you look back on it, of course, before the '67 war and before the capture of Jerusalem, it was almost a high point in the Arab world in terms of land and containment. Lots of which has since gone by the books. But basically for those of the Embassy staff, if you could say that they were subjected to the usual clientitis that affects Foreign Service Officers by which I mean the tendency to support the country you are in, I think it was largely and pretty solidly linked to trying to keep a more or less even posture. At least up and till the famous "Let the Americans drink the waters of the Red Sea" speech of Nasser in the summer of '66. That I would say was about the time that things begin to go down hill. That and the fact that they had arrested one of the American diplomats at the Embassy and held him for a day and then kicked him out. Then we had the dumbest military attach# in God's green earth there who was not allowed access to Limited Distribution telegrams...

Q: Which is the lowest of classifications.

DWYER: Well, he had managed to get himself arrested with one of his junior officers, he was Air Force actually, in a station wagon. He had been on the desert road from Cairo to Alexandria, which went right by a Egyptian military base, and whatever he thought he was doing, I don't know, but he was out there with a 600mm lens or something, up on a hill—why he thought he could do this unobserved with his young captain, who knew better, I don't know. After finishing with his snapshots they continued driving along the road because they were supposedly en route to their summer house down in Alexandria. They found the way blocked by an armored personnel carrier with a tank in front and in

Library of Congress

back. It was a Saturday afternoon and I served in that case and several other cases as the expendable Foreign Service officer. Nobody wanted to touch this thing. The political section said, "They were stupid enough to get themselves into position, let them get themselves out of it." The Station people didn't want to have anything to do with them. The rest of the military were not going to do any good, so I was told to go down and see what I could do.

I drove down and there they were in there car—they had locked the windows and refused to get out. I met one of the most angry Egyptian Brigadiers that had ever been my misfortune to encounter. Frankly I kind of sympathized with him, because I think he was not so much angry with these guys taking pictures because that is what military attach#s are supposed to do, but for being so damn stupid and blatant. He said, "Now good, you are here from the Embassy you can witness me rip that automobile apart and haul those guys out of there." I said, "No, wait a minute, you know it is Saturday afternoon and we haven't gotten a hold of Washington yet (which was not quite true). Don't do anything that you will later regret. You could be a colonel again before you knew it if you made a misstep here. By all means check with Nasser's office out there and call so and so because our Ambassador had been in touch with him. Just don't do anything for awhile. These guys are not too bright, besides what could they have possibly taken pictures of—we know what armored personnel carriers look like, and everything else." He finally decided to sit on it and we went back and the Egyptian government said, "Well, kick them in the fanny and tell them not to do it again." It could have been a nasty thing. Still in the Arab world, if you do not except, as one would in the Western world, the line from the official spokesman, you can usually find a way to work around these things.

Luc Battle was a tremendously even tempered person. I saw him angry only twice. At this time he called the guy in and said, "You know, you have just come back from a conference in Germany where you and I both were lectured on satellite and U2 capabilities (the aircraft) of taking close-up pictures as if you were standing inside a place. What a stupid

Library of Congress

thing for you go do.” That was when the guy no longer had access to Limited Distribution telegrams.

We had a problem with an Agricultural Attach#, but there too, the Egyptians helped us. It was a corruption problem where he was smuggling money out of the country. I was still in Syria when it happened but he was our Agricultural Attach# for Syria too. I couldn't figure what he was doing coming through as often as he was. It turned out he was smuggling Egyptian pounds for rich Egyptians and selling them on the Lebanese pirate market. An Egyptian farmer came to us at the Embassy and told us what he was doing so we got him out of there. Bill Boswell, who had been head of security in the Department before he came out, was just absolutely furious at this. It turned out that there was not much we could do. The attach# lost his \$15,000 a year job. We should have let him sit there for another year in hopes that he would not declare it on his income tax—but he did declare it so he walked away with it.

But that was another case where the Egyptians accused an Embassy employee and arrested him, an American diplomat, on the basis of bribing Egyptian officials. All of this was worked out pretty well with the Egyptians.

Q: You left Cairo in 1966. Is there anything else we should touch there?

DWYER: No, I can't think of anything else.

Q: You got, in theory, a change of climate when you came back to Washington because you were dealing with Scandinavia weren't you?

DWYER: Well, this was the deal I had made to stay on an extra year in Cairo when Luc Battle asked me to stay on for a third year. I said, “You know I did this once before and I really shouldn't do it. I am spending too long in these countries. I will stay a third year but this time let's see what we can have because I have been assigned to Aden as deputy principal officer thanks to the fact that our political counselor in Damascus had been

Library of Congress

assigned as principal officer in Aden and asked for me and to my absolute horror got me before I knew what was going on.”

Q: If anything is considered the armpit of the world...

DWYER: Well, this was Curt Jones and I liked Curt and I could have worked with him happily, but we had three years in Damascus and that is a hard post, particularly on a wife in those days and Cairo was a great deal better but still if I had intended to make a career out of the Arab world I had better learn the language better than I did in after hour classes.

So Luc Battle swore on his oath as an ambassador that he would find something for me if I stayed another year. I did and he was as good as his word and got me what I think was one of the most fun jobs I've ever had as a junior officer. The reason Scandinavian affairs was the ideal place for a junior officer to work on a Desk was because the countries are not important enough for the Assistant Secretaries to be their own Desk Officers. Also the Scandinavian diplomats are terribly nice people and unlike the senior officials we send to their countries they are all career and highly polished and knowledgeable almost without fail—and the almost is a certain Swede—and terribly interesting and pleasant people to work with. So I found myself first year as Finnish Desk Officer and then for a year and a half or two years as Denmark, Norway and Iceland the NATO country officer with an assistant. An extraordinary good time was had by all. Because our ambassadors were well trained and house broken you could get them in to see anybody they wanted very, very easily.

Q: When you say your ambassadors you are talking about the Scandinavian ambassadors to this country?

DWYER: Yes. I can remember the time the Norwegian Ambassador had his initial courtesy call on Dean Rusk. They had been friends for a long time. The Norwegian had been private secretary to the Norwegian Foreign Minister and as such had been a young foreign service officer when Dean Rusk had been younger in the Department. Precisely six

Library of Congress

minutes after this cordial meeting the Norwegian said, "Thank you Mr. Secretary" and got up to leave. I think Rusk was surprised, I certainly was surprised. Rusk said, "What's your hurry? Have you no more to discuss?" And he said, "Mr. Secretary, I have always things to discuss with you, but at no time will I ever take more than five minutes because I want to come back." Rusk, of course, was flattered and pleased and said, "Well, sit down." So, they talked for another twenty minutes.

I got back to the office and looked over my notes which were all about growing up, etc. and decided not to do a memcon because there was nothing there. A few weeks later the Executive Secretary called and said, "Where is the memcon?" I said, "They didn't say anything." There was absolute silence on the other end of the line. He said, "What do you mean they didn't say anything?" I said, "Precisely that. They didn't say anything." Anyway that was how I learned how the Department works—that you had to have a memcon no matter what. I think I got a couple of paragraphs out of it.

Q: What about our relations with Finland? Here is sort of an odd country at that time—we are talking about 1966-67. How did you see our interests in Finland?

DWYER: On the whole they were excellent. They were excellent with all the Scandinavian countries with the exception of Sweden because of the Vietnam War—there was Olaf Palma marching down the streets of Stockholm with his arm around the Viet Cong representative. I had Sweden for 6 months or so while someone was on leave as well. That was a little different experience. Of course, none of the other Scandinavians were very fond of Vietnam, but they were forgiving and tolerant.

Finland was a special case, obviously. It was the 50th anniversary of Finnish independence while I was the Desk Officer there. I spent a lot of time on that. We had a Finnish ambassador, Olavee Munki—I forget what he had been before but he certainly wasn't a career diplomat—who was a little bit rough around the edges. He was clever enough to use the Desk on a personal basis. I spent a lot of time with his invitation lists

Library of Congress

and what to do about his parties, and could I insure that the Secretary would show up for something, which fortunately for Scandinavia I could. We were interested in Finland as being a close neighbor of the Soviet Union.

The Finns have an excellent reputation in the United States as the only country that paid its First World War debts and when the 50th anniversary came along Tyler Thompson, our ambassador in Helsinki, said we really have to do something special for the Finns on their 50th anniversary. I went down to Jimmy Symington, who was our then Chief of Protocol, and was informed that we had something like \$250 with which to make this big impression on the Finns. The Ambassador had in mind endowing a Chair in American History at the University of Helsinki, which we figured was in the neighborhood of \$300-\$500,000—and I had \$250! Jimmy Symington wanted to give them a tree. I said, “A tree to Finland?” He said, “Certainly, not just any tree but a tree from Mt. Vernon, that is something special.” I said, “There isn't a tree that is special—maybe a redwood if you could get one.”

At one point we were thinking of a bison because you could get them free—if you are interested I think you still can from the Department of the Interior which will be glad to deliver one to a railroad head if you take charge of it from there. I was thinking of giving a bison to the Helsinki zoo. I called up our ambassador there and he said, “Have you ever smelled a bison? Not while I'm ambassador.”

Anyway, my predecessor had had a brilliant idea and we went down to see Congressman Blachit who had the greatest number of Finns in his constituency of any congressman in the United States. He was Chairman of the Civil Service and Post Office Committee. He was from that region of Minnesota directly north—I'm including Duluth—the mine area where all the Finns are. We went down to see his Administrative Assistant, who has since succeeded him as Congressman, Jim Oberstar. Jim liked what we suggested which was to issue a stamp in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Finnish independence. This is very rarely done—that there is a stamp issued in honor of any individual country—but anybody who knows about the Finns likes them and they really had nobody, except

Library of Congress

perhaps the Teetotalers Association or somebody like that who might find fault with the Finns. So he said, "I will bring it up with the Congressman." Which he did. He said, "I will tell you what, if you get the stamp what ceremonies are you going to have?" I said, "Well, the United Nations General Assembly begins in September and we thought we would invite the Foreign Minister down to Delaware which is not very far because that was where the first Finns and Swedes in colonial times settled in the United States. We would issue the stamp there." Jim said, "That is not good enough. If you can get him out for a couple of days in the Congressman's district, at one of the post offices—there is a post office Finland, Minnesota—I think I can get you a stamp." I went to Munki and he said that there was no way he was going to get his Foreign Minister, who subsequently became Prime Minister, up to Minnesota. He said, "Unless you said you could possibly give him a few days of fishing. The Foreign Minister is an avid fisherman and that's pretty good fishing up there." I went back to Jim Oberstar and asked if that would be possible. Jim said, "Nothing easier." He got a hold of some Finns in his congressman's constituency up there who were absolutely delighted and they set up a program of three days of fishing up in the boundary lakes on the Canadian border.

I called Olavee Munki and said, "All right, we got the fishing." Then Olavee said, "How is he going to get there?" I said, "Well I was kind of hoping he was going to buy a ticket." Munki said, "Let me see what my commercial officer can do." As it turned out the head of the Coast Guard was an American of Finnish descent who had a Lear jet. He had always wanted to buy a couple of Finnish icebreakers and the Finns had wanted to sell them, but they had never surmounted the congressional problems about buying foreign icebreakers. But he said he would be delighted to find some business that would take him out to Minnesota at the required time if the Foreign Minister could get back on his own. So that was how we left it.

The Foreign Minister came and I met him in Minnesota, because I talked myself in to going. The State Department couldn't care less, I had a terrible time getting them to even

Library of Congress

pay my way out to Minnesota as someone to watch over it. I went out there with a guy named Rosenberg.

Anyway, there was Rosenberg and Dwyer and more Finns than you could shake a stick at. We all got up to this lodge that one of these Finns owned. They were all great outdoorsmen, as all Finns are, and we had houseboats, canoes and just every facility for fishing that you could think of. About 30 minutes after we got to the lodge the conversation began in Finnish and didn't stop for three days. So except for Rosenberg and Dwyer, we shared a room, we were on the outskirts. Our only problem was that the Foreign Minister never caught a fish. Finally the guide said, "Listen, let me take him in a small boat, I know where he can get a fish." So I went out with the rest of the Finnish Embassy and we fished—we were going for steelheads and pike. I finally asked someone where was he taking the Foreign Minister—a question I should have asked before he left. He said, "Well, we are kind of fished out around here but he has gone over to the Canadian side. I am sure he can get fish there." All I could think of was the Finnish Foreign Minister getting caught by a game warden on the Canadian side. But he fortunately showed up.

In the mean while all the Finns in my boat were gloriously drunk and the press officer sat in the bait bucket and we had to pull all the hooks out of his rear end and he didn't even feel it, fortunately. We had a bang up colossal dinner that night as we were all going back. The same press officer proceeded to go out to a bar that was frequented by the Swedes and Norwegians—the Swedes were at one end and the Norwegians were at the other and there was no place for a Finn because he got beat up on both sides. He was delivered back by the local police—he was in very poor shape which got him in Dutch with his ambassador. But, outside of that, it was a wonderful trip.

Q: I would like to move on from this period. You then got yourself back overseas. You served in Sofia from 1970-72. How did that assignment come about and what were you doing?

Library of Congress

DWYER: Well, the assignment came about because although I had very much enjoyed my work with the Scandinavians—it was great—I had always had a longing to go to Eastern Europe and I had applied for and was accepted for the Serbo-Croatian language training where I was to be the second man in the political section there. I had my assignment cut short, which was very nicely done by my immediate superior, and got through approximately eight weeks of Serbo-Croatian language training only to discover that the guy who I was to succeed changed his mind and had requested that he be extended for another year. This left me high and dry without a job.

We had just adopted a child and I didn't want to accept an immediate overseas assignment because I had to be in the District of Columbia six months for the adoption to be final. Obviously my wife and I did not want anything to go wrong with that and I was, therefore, unwilling to take a chance with something going wrong with the adoption process which would cease if we went overseas and we would have to do it again when we came back. I was offered Bulgaria—was harassed with Bulgaria, but a Foreign Service classmate of mine, Don Tice, who had served in Bulgaria said this is not something that you really want to do, and I didn't want to do it. But after eight weeks of Serbo-Croatian and no other job—I could have gone on and finished Serbo-Croatian but there was no job prospect in sight and seemed like a waste—so I said all right we will reluctantly go to Bulgaria. I in some ways still regret it, but I then switched over to Bulgarian language training which was kind of a disaster because I sounded like a Macedonian, rather than a Bulgar...

Q: I took Serbo-Croatian and found I could talk to Bulgarians very slowly and they could talk to me very slowly and we could get along fine, but obviously they are two different languages.

DWYER: They are indeed two different languages.

Library of Congress

We got there in early summer or spring of 1970. It was a really remarkably dull country in terms of what was going on. The Soviet Ambassador was referred to as the pro-consul which indeed he was. It had many of the disadvantages of Moscow without the advantage of knowing you are in a major country—major player.

Q: No Bolshoi Theater or anything like that.

DWYER: Well, a pretty decent opera. Boris Christoff would come back and do a good Mose once or twice, but then there would be only one or two tickets for the Embassy and that was it and you never saw him anyway.

There were many of the same problems as in Moscow. There were the secret police, the constant surveillance and living in the golden ghetto—which certainly was a ghetto, but not all that golden. It was terribly difficult on the spouses, on my wife, because at least we could go to the office and have our work to do and its a characteristic of the Foreign Service Officer that he can be in a country for a few weeks and he can convince himself that it is really important, whether it is or not, but at least give a little seasoning to the work. Whereas the wives were pretty much confined to other diplomat corps wives. It was not a very exciting place.

I had a little experiment of bringing in vegetables from Yugoslavia because in the winter we got no fresh vegetables whatsoever and we pretty soon got tired of cabbage and pickled cabbage.

Q: And turnip salad?

DWYER: Yes.

Q: We had a lot of turnip salad.

Library of Congress

DWYER: A number of us arranged with one of these transfer firms to bring in some fresh fruits and vegetables around the Christmas season. Of course, they just disappeared and two weeks after they had arrived and were, of course, spoiled, Customs called up and said, "Oh, by the way we forgot to tell you that you have a shipment down there." We didn't try that again.

A lot of people depended on the Commissary in Athens. We would send a truck down occasionally, but I didn't like that to begin with. A few of us, and I found this quite helpful, hunted quite a bit—wild pheasant, quail and grouse. This kept meat on the table because the only thing you could buy in meat generally in the winter time was a fairly decent tenderloin, but there is only so many tenderloins you can eat and frozen chickens. That was about it—and, of course, we did better than the Bulgarians did. But the Bulgarians had what we didn't have—there was no Bulgarian alive who didn't relatives back in the village and on the farm.

Q: Were there any major policy problems? You say it was a pretty dull time.

DWYER: No. Absolutely none that I can think of in terms of policies. I was political/economic officer with an assistant and a secretary. The Embassy was limited by the Bulgarian government to, I think it was 21 people which included 8 marines. The economic job in many ways was a better job than any other because there were things that the Bulgarians wanted to buy and certainly things Americans wanted to sell, or at least some Americans firms. That gave me access to a certain level of Bulgarian officialdom—the Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Foreign Trade.

As far as policies were concerned there, our policy towards Bulgaria was whatever was left over after our policy towards the Soviet Union. There was not much distinction made between the two, and I suppose rightly so. We were interested in specifically any Bulgarian interest in the Middle East, and of course Bulgaria was sitting on the flank of two NATO countries, Greece and Turkey. There is nothing that the Greeks and Turks don't know

Library of Congress

about the Bulgarians and vice versa. Nobody is going to watch a Bulgarian more closely than a Turk. There was a large Turkish embassy and a couple of consulate generals there. The Greeks were going through several governments at the time, Colonels and what have you, it was pretty quiet there. The Bulgarians were smart enough not to tempt the Yugoslavs too greatly—any claims to Macedonia or things like that. They were aware of the problems of the territory that was still contested between the two countries and while they made the proper noises that it was still greater Bulgaria they weren't going to tempt Tito to have a little show of force or something and the Soviets probably wouldn't have permitted it anyway.

The Soviets had military facilities there but no troops stationed there. We were interested in those. I had my best weekend of my tour in Bulgaria when I was out looking for Warsaw Pact maneuvers over in the Balkan mountains, which are inland from and run parallel to the Danube River. We had heard that there were maneuvers out there so we thought we would go and see if we could find them. The map showed a secondary road going over the Balkans, and I, by that time, had driven over most of Bulgaria and said "let's try it" to my wife. Near the top of this road I broke the oil pan and there we were with my American car equipped with power steering, power brakes, etc. and no engine—there was nothing around, the road was just a dirt track. I turned off the motor because I had lost all the oil and coasted down the other side of the mountain and in to the little village of Stara Lychar. The head of the state farm came out and the first thing he asked me was did I know that I was the first wheeled vehicle that had come over that route since the Second World War. It was the Soviet jeeps and tanks that had come over. Anyway there we were.

The village was the headquarters of the state farm, the forestry farm, and the people, as was true in the villages almost anywhere, could not have been nicer. My major concern, as was everyone's concern in the Embassy, was not to get people in trouble with the secret police, etc. so there was a two room hotel over the general store where we got a room. Then we tried to call the Embassy—we had an Embassy truck, but it had gone to Athens to fill up with commissary goods and wasn't going to be back for a day or two. So we

Library of Congress

had dinner at a little cafe that was part of the general store. Before we knew it we had as company the deputy director of the state farm who was the acting director of it, and a guy from the commissariat to the mayor's office, and a third guy. The slivovitz was beginning to be passed with great regularity and it looked like a long evening. I said that I hoped everyone understand that I was a diplomat from the American Embassy and, although, delighted to have their company wanted to be certain they understood who I was. The third guy, who I wasn't sure of, said, "Don't worry, I am the secret police guy, we have checked you out and it is okay." My wife saw the male bonding going on and went off to bed.

We sat there a while with a second bottle of slivovitz. Finally the guy from the state farm said, "Listen I think we can fix this guy's car." There was only one car in the village which belonged to the director of the state farm and he wasn't there, so there weren't any cars in the village at that time. They had trucks, but no cars. We left the cafe singing Bulgarian songs, some of them I didn't know I knew. Somebody came along with a truck from the state farm and we tied my car on behind it and tooled off down the road about midnight or one in the morning to the machine tractor station. There was a veteran sitting guarding the gates with his little fire. We all pounded on the gates and said let us in. He said I can't let you. They prevailed on him and finally he agreed to let us in if we had a couple of drinks with him. So we opened up the gates and pushed the car up on the concrete oil changing ramps, used for changing the oil of tractors, that fortunately fit. We proceeded to drink some more and then went back to the hotel. By this time I am surprised I found it—wouldn't have without the help of the Bulgarians.

I went to bed and got up in the morning with the most horrible slivovitz hangover that I ever had, with the big notion that I had pushed my car up on a piece of concrete somewhere but wasn't quite sure. I went down and there were all my buddies waiting for me at breakfast as chipper as could be. We got into the truck and went out there. The whole state farm stopped work because here was a modern American car with all the fancy goodies Americans have in their cars. It was a Mercury with the old 6 # Liter Ford V-8 engine which I had gotten by mistake. When we took the oil pan out, the whole oil pump

Library of Congress

dropped out. I thought, Oh, god, we will never get it back up. The blacksmith beat out the oil pan and welded it. The apprentice cut a new gasket from cork and then we put it back on only to discover that we didn't have any oil. There were only trucks and tractors in the village. Somebody came up with two cans of oil that were reserved for the director's automobile and we poured them in there and then we filled it up with tractor oil. We drove back to the village, about a mile and a half away, with everybody in the back seat—must have been eight of us in the car.

Nobody allowed us to pay for anything—hotel room, food, nothing. I said to the deputy director let me at least buy a few bottles of slivovitz, but they wouldn't hear of it. Finally the guy from the tractor station said you know what you could do, we would love to drive your car. We spent the whole afternoon driving that car up and down this dirt road and I think everyone in the village who knew how to drive and two or three who didn't, drove the car. We left as very good friends.

A year later, the guy from the machine tractor station walked into the Embassy in Sofia—we had militia outside who normally would not let Bulgarians in unless they had business and could prove that they had business. There was this great commotion outside the door and somebody went out and here was my friend who told the militia where to get off and proceeded to walk in and said he wanted to see his friend Dwyer, which sent all the spooks right up the wall. I came down to see him and said, “Stanov you just walked in here?” He said, “Sure why not? I just tell the militia off.” So, I called my wife Sally at home and said, “Sally, Stanov is here.” We really wanted to do something for him, but we didn't want to have him over to the apartment because it is in a secured building and we knew we were bugged, etc. He was a bit of a rustic and we didn't want to take him to a fancy hotel. So we ended up at what was called the Makana, a very nice place like a Greek taverna.

Stanov was his expansive self. We get down there and the waiter comes up and says would you like a slivovitz, and I thought of my Finnish friends who would say at that point,

Library of Congress

“goodbye clear day” and said, “Well, maybe just one.” Stanov said no way and brings out of his beat up briefcase his homemade slivovitz. The waiter said, “You can't serve that in here.” Stanov said, “I wouldn't drink your crap that you call slivovitz.” I said, to the waiter, “Okay, bring the slivovitz.” Stanov poured it onto the floor and we drank his!

Outside of that, policy matters of Bulgarian foreign policy we had almost nothing. There was a little on the Vietnam thing. We had the Viet Cong represented in Bulgaria to say nothing of the Hanoi government, North Koreans—all the people we didn't like. The Mongolian, who shot the head off the Chief of Protocol at the diplomatic hunt and a few others like that. It wasn't bad. We had a mountain cabin in the village where we could get away, but outside of that it was pretty deadly dull.

Q: I would move on, if you don't mind. I thought I would skip an assignment that you had in Cultural Affairs because I would like to concentrate on two other ones that you had. We may continue this another time, if you don't mind, and see how things go. You were in Cultural Affairs from 1972-74. In summary what were your concerns and what were you doing?

DWYER: That turned out to be quite a great job. A friend of mine was the office director of it and looking over possible assignments from Bulgaria there was nothing that appealed to me very much. The idea of doing something Eastern Europe seemed better than wandering off to a functional area. I ended up there, eventually as de facto deputy and principally responsible for several countries, but also the overall budget and financing of our programs. The programs consisted of the Fulbright program and a few other exchange programs. My principal concerns were Eastern Europe and we had other people working on the Soviet Union. We had a wonderful resource there that nobody in the Department seemed to know about or care about and that we had an almost limitless budget, literally millions of dollars in Polish zlotys. We could spend them not only in Poland but in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Hungary and Czechoslovakia were still a little dicey in those days. We had a hard time doing things. We did a little bit in Budapest,

Library of Congress

Hungary, but a very little bit in Prague. A fair amount of things in Romania—anything that would irritate the Russians, I guess. Of course, quite a bit in Yugoslavia, including starting a prototype of an American land-grant university.

My particular bailiwick was Poland, principally because of the zlotys. I found that the Poles, just like the Syrians, were good entrepreneurs. There was a budget of a couple of million dollars to run the Fulbright program. If we could agree with the Poles on a way to save money, we could expand the program. I think about that time the Polish Airlines got approval to land in the States. There was a guy at the University of Poznan, Mickel something, who was a real wheeler-dealer, and he and I late at night at some Poznan cafe got the brilliant idea that if he could, he had a big English language program there, get the Ministry to agree to funding the airline fares of all our Fulbright people, I would agree to spend the dollars that we were using on the fares to bring more Poles to the States—split our profits 50-50. In a short matter we increased the program by about 50 to 75 percent. He went with me the next day to see the Minister who said it was a great idea—I spoke with the Minister in French and then had to translate into Polish for Mike—and agreement was reached in about ten minutes.

The wonderful thing about this office of Cultural Affairs was—I had just committed the US government to expanding the program by half its size and nobody cared, I could do it. I knew that my immediate superior, the Officer Director, would think it was great. Once I got the taste of what money was like, which I had never had before, we expanded the English language program in Poland so that it became, next to Russian which was compulsory, the second most common language not only in the universities but the high schools. We established the Chair of American studies at the University of Warsaw in conjunction with the University of Illinois.

We did a pilot study with the Senior Scientific Council—a computer program which was a management program from New York University. It was a simulated program that NYU used for their MBAs—actually operating a business with participation of volunteer bankers,

Library of Congress

volunteer tax people, people actually from Chase Manhattan Bank or from the IRS, etc. So we spent quite a bit of money although we didn't make a real dent in the zlotys in adopting this to Poland for their commercial departments. It was a great thing because by the time we had this very large computer simulation done, it not only taught the Poles about how its own government worked, but you can imagine what a tool it was for our businessmen. They could play the game here and learn how to do business in Poland. So it turned out to be a much better job than I thought, because I had millions of dollars and nobody gave a damn what we did with it.

Q: Well then I would like to move on. I thought we might finish off Chad and maybe then set this up for another time.

DWYER: Sure. Okay.

Q: How did you get your next assignment? You went to Chad from 1974-77.

DWYER: Well, my Office Director said, Please stay on and we will confirm you as my deputy in Cultural Affairs." I said that I had stayed on too long. I went down to see a friend of mine, a classmate, in personnel assignments and said, "John, whatever you have." He said he had three small posts in Africa all of which need DCMs. They were in countries that I—well I suppose I had heard of them, but didn't know much about. The crucial factor was that the ambassador in Chad was leaving momentarily and there was no one on the horizon at any time soon so I could go out with the assurance that I would be Charg# for a considerable period of time. That was why I went to Chad. I wanted a chance to run my own show for a while. Again it is one of these things that "you can have the post if you skip the DCM training course and get there yesterday, because..."

Q: Who was the ambassador?

Library of Congress

DWYER: I was going to say McClintock, but I think it was McCormick. After that he was ambassador in Morocco. It was a good Irish name, and I can't think of it. [Edward W. Mulcahy] I never saw him. The only thing I did was buy his car—which was a mistake.

Anyway, we arrived and I had a three-day overlap with my predecessor, the DCM, and found myself with this little Embassy in the middle of Africa. Fortunately, my French, although rusty, came back pretty fast. My limited Arabic didn't hurt as Arabic was really the lingua franca.

Q: What was the situation in Chad at that time. We are talking about 1974-77.

DWYER: The President of Chad, Tombalbaye, was one of the last, if not the last, remaining civilian presidents of those west African countries that had become independent in 1960. All the other countries had had their military coup d'etats and the military or somebody else had taken over. Tombalbaye had managed to survive principally by splitting up the opposition into several groups. For example, we not only had a Chadian army, we had a frontier force, or militia, a gendarmerie and a presidential guard, each of which was a counter balance to the others.

Secondly we had the French army. Chad sits in the middle of the African continent and had the largest airport in the area. It is the airport where most north/south African traffic stops. So we had one or two regiments of the Foreign Legion there and at least one other regiment, and we had an on-going civil war that went in fits and spurts and had been since shortly after independence.

Chad, like the Sudan, is one of the African countries that is Arab in the north and black in the south. The belt that became famous because of the drought in those years, the Sahel, basically is that belt that goes across Africa where to go north, the crops need irrigation and to go south they do not. Of course it was the movement of that drought belt south that brought the horrendous famine as it has done before. The black population became the

Library of Congress

governing population upon independence, offsetting centuries of de facto if not actual Arab rule. The Arabs of the north had always considered the blacks as inferior citizens from the time of slavery—and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if there were still some black slaves somewhere up near the Libyan/Chadian border.

Although the French alleged in 1923 that the country was pacified, it never really was. From the Mediterranean straight south to Chad, are traditional caravan routes that are still used by trucks and landrovers, which go right through civil wars and everything else, so you would find in the bazaars of the capital, N'Djamena, dates from the north and carpets from Turkey, etc. at most times during the civil war. Tombalbaye had appointed black governors to the north region and from a time when the Arabs could consider themselves first rate citizens they in some respects became second class. This area of northern Chad had never been pacified. You went up there at your own risk.

As a matter of fact when we arrived in Chad there was the Cloust affair. Madame Cloust who was a French wife of an archeologist, I guess she was an archeologist herself, he and a couple of West Germans were being held hostage by Hissen Habre and the rebels in the north. The German government simply flew an airplane in and brought their countrymen back. Of course, the Chadians immediately broke relations with Germany which the Germans didn't particularly care.

But this the French couldn't do because this was their client state. In effect the French were paying for the government of Chad. The only money crop to speak of was cotton through which most of their foreign exchange came from, but most of it was subsidized by the French government. At the same time we had Conoco, an American oil company, looking for petroleum, which they actually found up in the desert and in several places, and this had the prospect of making the Chadians possibly independent in terms of foreign exchange at least. The American government had very little interest other than the fact that it was an American company.

Library of Congress

There was a small AID program there. We were putting in about \$10-15 million a year. The program really wasn't formally established until after I got there. We also had 50 or 60 Peace Corps volunteers—an excellent program. Superb young people and some not so young. I still rankle when I think of these kids out in the boonies where there was no way we could get them back if they got sick and really wanted to come back. When Nixon commented about the Peace Corps being a draft dodger's paradise, or something, I often wished he could have seen these kids up there, because I thought the world of them. Strangely enough the harder task you assigned them the better they did at it. Sometimes the ones in the city got into trouble, but the ones out by themselves did a superb job. We ended up doubling the program until I finally had to cancel it.

The Chadian government wanted from us basically what every government in Africa wants, and that is some money, please. After the overthrow of Tombalbaye, which was a military coup d'etat despite the fact that he had gotten the forces divided... He was overthrown and I will never forget it because I had sat there on a Friday in this largely modest little country. However, the situation was tense. I talked to our military attach# and our station people and our political people—is this guy going to last or not? We weighed the pros and cons—he had just jailed the top militia, gendarmerie officers and top army officers. I sat down and said you know maybe I should just say nothing but that is not what I am paid to do out here. Maybe there is somebody who is interested back there. I wrote a long analytical piece that said that in effect I think he is good for another 3 to 6 months. I gave it to the communications clerk, and of course we were still dependent on telex there we didn't have radio communications. Went home. About 3 o'clock Saturday morning the firing begins and I said to my wife, “God damn it to hell.”

My house was between the army camp and the President's lot. I went out and stood on the road and the troops were going by, and the shooting, etc. Boy, was I ticked off. There was a French intelligence colonel across the street from me. He walked over and I said, “Are you doing this?” He said, “If we are, I don't know about it.” I think the answer was that

Library of Congress

he may have known about it but he wasn't doing it. At about that time the commanding general of the Chadian Army pulls up and he says, ignoring me, to this French intelligence colonel, "Which way do I jump?" The colonel says, "I don't know, but jump one way or another." So fortunately, the general jumped the right way. Tombalbaye was overthrown, he was killed in his bungalow and his body was taken up in one of the old Chadian Air Force DC-3's and jettisoned somewhere out over the desert so that it could not be a form of pilgrimage.

Q: Was he particularly hated or just in the way?

DWYER: Well, in effect in these countries, and what I say so often to my friends who don't know some of these small countries, that there is not a true government in the sense that there is in the western countries. The villages were neither oppressed nor very much helped so you are talking about the government establishment as a couple of big towns. But Tombalbaye became, or was when I got there, an alcoholic—but half the government was and so was half the next government—but he became increasingly incapable of governing the country. He became increasingly paranoid. He was out in this isolated place waiting for them to come and as the more isolated he became the less well he could even attempt to govern the country. He suggested to the ambassador before I got there, that why didn't the United States take over this country, just call him president and the United States could do whatever we want. The telegram was called, "Chad On A Silver Platter", which we didn't want.

As the civil war began to heat up a little bit and the rebels began advancing towards the south I became concerned about two Peace Corps volunteers we had up in Faya Largeau, which was up in the central part of the country—in the Arab part, original Beau Geste country. The military in their wisdom had decided to give our DC-3 to the Ethiopians, before the Ethiopian revolution, of course, and had promised to replace it with a Lockheed King Air. But the Lockheed mechanic took one look at the country and said no way he was going to be their and the Air Force wasn't going to assign an airplane without a mechanic

Library of Congress

there so we lost our airplane which meant that I lost the ability to get these people, which I could only do in the dry season anyway. When it became time, I thought, to get them out—the French had withdrawn their teachers, it looked like the government was going to lose at any time the rebels made a push—I sent them word through the Foreign Ministry that they were going to come out. About one o'clock that morning the Foreign Minister called me up and said, “Mr. Dwyer I am speaking on direct orders of President Tombalbaye.” I could hear the music blasting in the background and the glasses clinking and it was obviously a great party. He said, “I am formally instructed to inform you that if you pull those two Peace Corps volunteers out of Faya Largeau, the President will expel the whole Peace Corps and maybe your aide with it.” I said to the Foreign Minister, “Fine. We will talk about it in the morning. I will see you tomorrow and let you know then.” There was no way I was going to let these people stay there. I didn't even bother to ask Washington. That would have just held things up for days. I went down the next morning and I said to the Foreign Minister, “Mr. Foreign Minister, thank you for your call. I have informed Washington that it is the decision of the Chadian government that they would be very unhappy were we to withdraw our Peace Corps volunteers from Faya Largeau. But despite this, which we can understand, and we mean no reflection on your government, but we have no airplane of our own anymore, etc., etc. why we have decided to go ahead and do this.” The Foreign Minister said, “Well that wasn't what the President told me last night.” I said, “My French isn't quite up to snuff Mr. Foreign Minister, I guess I misunderstood you.” He said, “Well, maybe you didn't.”

But then we wondered how we would get them out. They are a couple of hundred of miles up in the desert. Fortunately, that year was the Soviet's year to deliver drought aid up there and the Soviets had a couple of Soviet transports. By coincidence, the Soviet Ambassador was a great friend and he, unfortunately had the habit of giving me a great big kiss every time he saw me—he had been the economic counselor of the Soviet Embassy in Sofia. He was terribly bored in Chad—he had almost nothing to do. He was a pretty nice guy. I said, “Vladimir, old buddy, would you go and shanghai my Peace Corps volunteers and bring

Library of Congress

them back?" He said, "Certainly, would be happy to do so." And he did so. The next flight to Faya Largeau the Soviets picked up the Peace Corps volunteer—fortunately one was in town so there was only one up there—and brought him back kicking and screaming. He said, "They wouldn't have hurt me, I have members of Habre's family in my English class. They wouldn't have captured me." I said, "Listen, they have a whole bunch of people up north who said the same thing. I have been around these parts of the world long enough. You may think you are half Chadian, but you are not half Chadian to me and not half Chadian to the Chadians. I am delighted to talk to you and get a briefing on what is going on in Faya Largeau but I want you out of there and you are not going back." Where upon the kid went out and wrote a letter back to someone in the United States that said that son of a bitch in the Embassy has been a real pain in the ass. He is just like all the other State Department people, but he will get around him because he knew Habre and I knew... Well, of course, what the kid doesn't realize is that all his mail is being read.

I liked the Chadians, but I never quite forgave them. Our Ambassador's wife was not well and had been taken back to the United States. The Ambassador had decided that he had to follow. He left and I was again Chargé—he had just gone the week before when the kid wrote this particular letter including me and the public affairs officer, who had a high profile, too. The Ambassador gets on the plane having been decorated by the new military regime with the order of the Golden Camel, or something, and two days later the Foreign Minister calls me in and says, "Dick, this has nothing to do with you personally, but we are PNGing your public affairs officer, your station chief and the brat who was in the Peace Corps."

Of course I knew nothing about the letter. I had no idea what had happened. I called these three people into my office, individually, and said what did you do? Nobody could account for it. I knew the public affairs officer, a big fellow about 6 feet 3 inches who wore cowboy boots adding another couple of inches with a red beard, spoke good French and learning Arabic, knew everybody in town and in short, made the new government very nervous. In addition to which he had gotten into a fight with the Minister of Education, because

Library of Congress

the Minister of Education's wife who had been a long time employee of the USIA library was grilled by the policy after there had been a theft. So I could understand why they would get rid of him. They were getting rid of the station chief because he was declared, by declared I mean he was identified to the government of Chad as an employee of the Central Intelligence Agency, and was there with their permission and consent, but we had had the coup d'etat and the government change and it looked like a good time to get rid of him. And the Peace Corps volunteer, I didn't know what happened to him, although I could guess. After a while I finally got a copy of the letter. The only thing that was confusing about it was that the Peace Corps volunteer identified me as the CIA chief.

Q: What happened to this new government? This was not the Habre government?

DWYER: No, basically what happened to the new government is that it lost the war. The government was composed of military officers, Felix Malloum, who had been in jail and had been a general, became the president. The Foreign Minister had been a Lieutenant Colonel in the Guard, but all of them had been in the French Army at one point or another. Most had served in Algeria and a few in Vietnam. They were basically military men who simply could tolerate this highly corrupt and incompetent government no longer as is often the case only to find running the government is much more difficult than anyone had imagined. For the most part they were decent people.

I will never forget the independence days, which I lived in dread of after the military took over. I had heard rumors about the first one to the effect that the whole cabinet was going to jump out of an airplane and land in the stadium for the independence day parade. I laughed at it, but when independence day came, the whole cabinet jumped out of this airplane and did a pretty good job of it too. They were all paratroopers. On the second independence day—by then things were getting to be a little dicey. My daughter was home from school, from prep school abroad, and so she and my wife had decided to take advantage of the long weekend and take a look at the animals in the game part in the

Library of Congress

Cameroon. I was, therefore, a bachelor there. The independence day parade reviewing stand there...

Q: You were Charg# most of the time you were there weren't you?

DWYER: Yes. For about—I forget—Ed Little was the first ambassador there, it was he whose wife was sick and never should have been there as Africa was just too much for her to adjust to in her '70s. Ed Little had never served in Africa, or anywhere like it. He had been DCM in Switzerland and had never been to any place quite like Chad. Mrs. Little spoke no French at all and the Ambassador's wasn't very good.

I was in the unfortunate position, as DCMs often are, of having been there for a while and knowing everyone... I don't know if I ever told anyone this before but after the Ambassador decided he had been in Chad long enough and understood the problems he would go down to see the Foreign Minister by himself and come back and start to write the telegram. The Foreign Minister would call me up and tell me that he didn't think the Ambassador understood what he had said and will I make sure that he understands that the official position of the government of Chad is this. Then I would have the task of trying to massage the Ambassador's telegram to reflect what the Foreign Minister actually said without admitting that the Foreign Minister was calling me up and telling me that he didn't think the Ambassador understood what was going on.

Then we had the great Peace Corps debacle. As I said earlier I thought a great deal of the Peace Corps. Our Ambassador's wife thought very little of their morals. I must admit a great deal of penicillin was used by the Embassy nurse. She refused to invite any Peace Corps volunteer to her house for the Fourth of July. On learning this I decided to invite any Peace Corps volunteer or other American staff who cared to come to my place for a Fourth of July party. This did not endear me or my wife to the Ambassador. But I just could not leave out the people who were making the greatest contribution to the country. This was unthinkable to me.

Library of Congress

We had other problems. He wrote reviews of my efficiency report on a couple of officers which he showed neither to me nor the officers concerned. When the officers concerned discovered what he had written, which was not what he had said he had written, we had grievance problems and everything else. Again, I am sorry to say, it centered around his wife. He had a real problem coping with that woman who was ill. He finally decided he ought to go.

The next ambassador, Bill Bradford, came as a fresh breeze. He was an old African hand and he asked if I would stay on another year. I said with the greatest of pleasure. Except for the horrible diplomatic incident I involved his wife in when he first got there, why we got along wonderfully well.

Q: What was the incident?

DWYER: Well, the French Ambassador had our new Ambassador and the whole Embassy over for dinner shortly after their arrival. Our Ambassador decided to reciprocate and we had the whole French Embassy staff over for a lovely dinner. Jody Bradford, who was an effervescent, attractive, active, good looking blond woman, who was great fun, had at the time pretty rusty French, but this didn't stop her from using it. Here we were having drinks before dinner and the French Ambassador's wife and Mrs. Bradford were talking. Jody grabbed me by the arm as I am going by and says, "Dick, what is the French word for mattress?" Thinking quickly I said "matelot" and went on my way. The French Ambassador's wife had said, "How are you getting on in Chad?" And Jody had said we love it. The only problem is she said that we have the most uncomfortable bed in the world and we have finally gotten a new mattress for it and it is nice and firm and has made all the difference in the world. Now I had just told the Ambassador's wife that the French word for mattress was "matelot" which happened to be sailor and not "matelas" which was mattress. A series of giggles came out of the circle surrounding my Ambassador's wife. Unfortunately, she couldn't figure out what was so funny, but the new firm "matelot" made

Library of Congress

all the difference to her happiness in Chad. Fortunately she had a wonderful sense of humor. Outside of that we got along wonderfully well. It was great.

Q: Before we finish this, was there a Libyan problem at the time you were there or did this develop later?

DWYER: Yes. There was always a Libyan problem. Around 1939 the French government had made an agreement with the Italians about the border between Libya, an Italian colony at the time, and Chad. The fact of the matter was that—I don't know why it was particularly important to either government, it probably was not, because although it composed 10 percent of the area of the country of northern Chad it was mountainous terrain that was home to a few nomads and to the various caravans proceeding north and south. The agreement was signed, but never ratified. I guess the war came along or the government changed or something. After Chadian independence this became a matter of contention between Chad and Libya once again. Of course, the Organization of African Unity and its members had decreed that they would accept colonial borders as established by colonial powers for the simple and good reason that if they all, as new nations, tried to redefined their borders they would collapse into anarchy and civil war.

Chad was that was part of West Africa that was leftover after everybody took what they wanted—the rest of it they just called Chad. So you had something like a hundred different dialects, the President was from a village a few miles from the Foreign Minister's and the common language was French. The two lingua francas were French and Arabic. Anyway, according to one story there was supposedly traces of uranium found in the mountains. Well, I suppose there may have been some traces there, but uranium has not been in short supply for quite a while and there is no other really good economic reason that I know of for attempting this except for Libyan aggrandizement and the hope that here was an inferior and even weaker power that perhaps they could dominate and bully. They had with them, in those days, the Chadian exiles, Hissen Habre and what have you.

Library of Congress

As a matter of fact I came across a letter in our files from Hissen Habre applying for a Ford Foundation fellowship because Tombalbaye had said to all the Chadians who had been students for five and six years in Paris that enough was enough. If they couldn't learn what they needed to know in five or six years it was too bad, they had to come home. Habre was one of those and he applied for a Ford Foundation fellowship and we turned him down. I suppose if we had given it to him he would never have been Prime Minister of the country. In any event all those people were being given board and room by Qadhafi. Although at that time the Libyan Army was not actually in the country, Qadhafi had built an airstrip and a base just north of the disputed strip. There was no question that he was supplying and supporting the rebels. But as I say, these people in those areas have been rebels for the last thousand years. They are merchant bandits. The difference was that instead of having camels and Enfield rifles they now had landrovers and machine guns which made quite a difference.

The Chadian army was poorly equipped and organized. The Air Force had World War II fighters, A-6s. They came to me for parts. Upon asking the Pentagon about parts for these propeller driven aircraft, I received a telegram which said that they had located six of them but the museums wouldn't sell them. These were piloted by French pilots under the table and, of course, when—the French do these things so much better than the Americans, it is just infuriating to me that we have not learned how to do these things better. The French had no problem with their public opinion or anything about it and there was no way that I personally felt that we should get involved in this thing. The French would support the Chadians to the extent that it furthered French foreign policy interests which coincided largely as I thought with our own.

Felix Malloum, who was President, I think had a certain respect for me personally because I had held the fort on the grenade attack on him or so he thought, it didn't actually happen that way, but anyway he came to me and said, "We appreciate your economic aid and we value it but there is no point in trying to use economic aid 'til we have the country

Library of Congress

pacified because it was just being ripped up once again. What we really need are arms and training.” I had to say to him that it would take a Presidential decision that this was in the best interest of the American government. There is no way that Congress could see to it to agree that these interests are in the national security interests of the United States of America. He said, “Dick I know that, but that is not what I want. I just want \$50 million under the table just like you are doing down there in Angola, etc.” I said, “Huh, Mr. President, we don't do that.” And it wasn't two weeks later than some scandal broke in the United States about \$50 million to the former Portuguese colonies and was all over the newspapers. He said, “You see? That is all I wanted. I wouldn't have leaked it either.” This destroyed a lot of my credibility.

He at that time decided that he was going to the United States and plead his own case. I had this embarrassing telegram to send back that President Malloum was going to pay a visit on the American President next Friday. Someone came back with a cable saying he could not receive the president—which I had already told Malloum would be the case, but had agreed to send the telegram anyway—but, we would be happy to receive the vice president and the American Vice President would be happy to meet with him. This was ten times better than I ever thought we were going to do. I sat there and wrote a long telegram back to the Department saying that it was my personal feeling that in no way do we want to get involved in the Libyan war or the civil war...

[Tape 3, Side 1]

We agreed we would accept the Vice President of Chad who promptly went off with recommendation from the Embassy that in no way do we give him any encouragement that we were going to take sides in what in essences was a civil war and secondly that there wasn't going to be anything we could do to help him militarily—that was the policy paper of the Department.

Library of Congress

Somewhere along the line, however, the Chadian Vice President came back to me and said I had a wonderful visit and the Vice President has agreed that we should receive aid and he is working on it and I want you to let me know as soon as something comes through. I wired back and said, "What happened?" I got my reply, and I'm still not absolutely sure what happened, but by the time I could get back myself and talk with people—the story was that the Vice President did indeed tell him that and time passed before anybody caught it. Then they went back and redid the memcon so that he didn't quite say that and here I am again—the guy out in the field trying to...

Q: This is an important thing to remember because we are in a way substituting for documents. Somewhere for future historians there is going to be a memo of conversation in which originally someone said something, but when people look at it closer they realize no, we shouldn't have said this—the thing can be rewritten. This is, of course, the substance of much of what the paper documentation is.

DWYER: I have no idea whether this actually happened or not, this was the scuttlebutt of what I was told when I could get back and talk with people who supposedly knew.

In any event it made life very difficult indeed in the field. We ended up finally, after I left, in giving them some training assistance, which I have been a strong foe of in three countries unless we do the damn thing properly. The problem is you tell them that we will give them a grant of \$100,000 which sounds like a lot, but what it will do is train two sergeants on how to run a motor pool. Now that is not what they have in mind. They may need it, but that is not at all what they had in mind. They would like some pilot training, which I think we eventually did. But it takes some time to train a fighter pilot. Basically they wanted help in fighting their civil war. We didn't do ourselves any good, particularly. Didn't hurt terribly, I suppose, because the government fell not long afterwards.

Things were getting dicey again and my wife was saying, "When I lose count of the coup d'etats it is time to go home." She had been shaken up by the fact—we had gone to a

Library of Congress

party at one of the embassies, a bridge party. I was feeling a little under the weather and besides I don't like playing bridge in French particularly anyway. We left early and the guy who took the place at our table and his wife were machine gunned as they were crossing the square that we crossed a half hour before. It would have been us if we had been there. That got my wife kind of excited although she is pretty good.

She was stalwart, you know, during the first coup d'etat. She took in all the wives and the families—we had about six in our house and none at the Residence I might add. So we had a house full of people. She is pretty good—not all that nervous.

Then on the second anniversary, as I said before, we got to the parade and the tribunal was up there. The President and the Vice President were in the first row, second row was the cabinet, third row the diplomats, and again I was Charg# and in the third row, and everybody else was sitting there. The tribunals....

I saw the guy throw what I thought was a rock at the President. The rock turned out to be a fragmentation grenade and when it exploded I was torn between, typical Foreign Service bias, because it hit all the press, I am sorry to say I didn't realize at the time, but several of them were killed and it was kind of messy. Then I'll be damned if the guy doesn't heave two more grenades at us. Some misguided patriot on the fourth one grabbed his arm and patriot and grenade thrower disappeared in small juicy pieces together.

I had been extraordinarily fortunate because I was sitting behind the Minister of Health's wife and she was a great big broad woman. She got pretty badly hurt but I just ruined my last blue suit and the papers I had. I being kind of fat by this time decided that I would simply lie on the floor for a bit, which I did. By the time I got up, I was the last one on the viewing stand. In front of me where the crowds had been—I might say that all this time the army was there waiting in formation for the parade to begin. Ambulances came and took away the wounded and the dead and picked up the pieces. Out in the Place de (inaudible)

Library of Congress

again are two thousand pairs of shoes where the whole African population had run out of their sandals. I have a slide at home that I took showing nothing but shoes out there.

The whole diplomatic corps and cabinet had gone over the rear of this reviewing stand which was about, by the time you had the rail up, about 8 feet. They were all arms and legs. The Italian had landed on the Egyptian, and the West German had landed on the East German and there were shouting and cries. I said to myself in isolated splendor out in the reviewing stand, I think I will go home. I wonder where my car and driver are. So I am walking down the steps of the reviewing stand when the Soviet Ambassador comes charging up and says, "Dwyer, I just want you to know that I would not have left the reviewing stand had it not been for the fact that my wife was with me and I wanted to get her to safety." And I know Sally is in the Cameroon and I said, "Ambassador Sokolov, let's go home and have a drink." He said, "Well, why not." About that time the Chinese Ambassador appears out of no where. He speaks no known language beyond Chinese. With the Chinese there the Soviet can't leave and I can see a crisis brewing here. Then the French, East German and the West German came back. The Vice President came back. So the seven of us and the Vietnamese head of security sat there and reviewed the parade. I was just dying because I knew the whole diplomatic corps was sending out telegrams and here I was stuck reviewing the bloody parade for two hours.

My wife and daughter were in the Cameroon and it, of course, hit the radio which mistakenly said a few diplomats had been killed. Sally gets in the landrover and with my daughter, secretary and chauffeur charged back over to the river only to find that the border is closed and that there is no way you can get across. Sally, therefore, hired a dugout canoe and with my secretary, who was a woman about 63, enormous who always wore a girdle, I never saw her without one—Lavona was a lovely person, a dedicated Foreign Service secretary—Lavona was in the front end of the canoe with the paddler in the rear and my wife and daughter in the middle came across. The next day she walks in the door and I am having a glass of champagne with the new East German Ambassador because it was his turn to call on me. We are sitting there in air-conditioned splendor

Library of Congress

drinking champagne. My wife comes in with her hair down and muddy up to her knees and she looks in and says, "Are you all right?" I said, "I'm fine Sally." And she says, "God damn you!" It is hard on family.

Anyway, by that time the civil war became real, the Egyptian was bound and determined that the rebels were going to try to occupy N'Djamena. I said, "Why? What would they want with it?" By this time, of course, after the military had come in, the French troops had been withdrawn. Lo and behold, however, six months or so after I left, the Habre and Northernists did take over the government of the country. And did receive at a time when the American Administration was particularly looking for nasty things to do to Qadhafi lucked into what they had always wanted— considerable help.

I might add, I talked to John Blaine, the most recent ambassador to Chad, after he came back —had been DCM once removed before me and is probably the best Chadian hand around. He said that the only thing that really concerned him about the civil war was that the Chadian army really won it. They went out there not with sophisticated weapons but enough landrovers, trucks with machine guns, and they went up there and shot the hell out of the Libyans and isn't it great. Of course, by this time, Habre was fighting...

Q: I want to stop here now.

DWYER: Yes, I have to go.

Q: This is the second interview with Consul General William Dwyer. Today is September 27, 1990. We left Chad in 1977. You returned to Washington to become an inspector. Is that correct?

DWYER: Yes, at that time the Foreign Service Assistance Inspector program had been abolished. This was the inspection program largely AID inspectors who looked at Assistance Programs. Someone, I am not quite who in the upper reaches of the Director General's Office, had decided that it was a good idea in recognition of the Inspection

Library of Congress

Corps' duties to report to the Secretary of State on the carrying out of American foreign policy in the countries that the regular Foreign Service Inspection Corps should absorb the duties of the former Foreign Assistance Corps. In other words, to analyze the policy implications of our Foreign Assistance Programs abroad. These included not only the usual AID programs, but military assistance programs, etc.

When I got back from Chad there were two or three job openings and I was interested in the Foreign Service Inspector one principally because of the assistance thing. I had spent three years in Chad watching the convolutions of an AID mission without direction or without much control from anybody and I had some very distinct feelings of how these things should and shouldn't be run. After a few years before in Egypt watching a sizeable military operation I had some ideas about those too. So I rather looked forward to it.

I think there were eight or nine of us, I don't remember how many—maybe a dozen—that had this particular duty. My first tour of assignment was in South America, the Andean countries. It was Chile, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador. I thoroughly enjoyed it because I had never been to South America before. When I first came into the Service, it seemed that young officers went to South America and weren't heard from again.

Q: I always considered it a black hole. I deliberately never learned Spanish because people did disappear.

DWYER: Yes, you saw them again at their retirement.

But it was a very interesting inspection tour with a colleague. We found all kinds of programs that had been established years, and in some cases decades before, that were still ongoing for whatever reason, no one ever knew. Often the ambassador wasn't even aware of it. I can remember a US naval officer on one of the interior rivers of Bolivia which of course is a land locked country. Now what ever purposes such a program might have had it would be hard to justify.

Library of Congress

Q: Was he helping with river gun boats?

DWYER: Well, not even gun boats. Yes, a river boat of some kind of development. Why it should have been a navy program if it were a worthwhile program and not a civilian program—things like that. We found in Ecuador that the AID program—Ecuador in 1977 for someone like myself coming from Central Africa, and my colleague who came from Saudi Arabia, looked like a beautiful and marvelous country. We found there that we were in effect reinstituting an AID program that had rather gone down hill. One of the problems there was that at that time Congress had a per capita maximum...

Q: If earning over a \$1,000 over x many years they wouldn't have an AID program.

DWYER: The US government was putting in a sizeable AID program in there at that time on the basis of the fact that the per capita income was under this amount. At the same time the Embassy commercial section was publishing commercial information for businessmen with per capita income half again that much.

In Chile we found considerable reluctance on the part of military officers to curtail AID programs despite the fact that it was our policy not to cooperate with the Pinochet government.

Q: We are backing away from Pinochet.

DWYER: Exactly. With this extensive military program—there was one fellow down there, I think he was a major or a naval officer who had been down on some island off the Chilean coast on a mapping program—I forget, a mapping program or installation of beacons, or something. It had been going on for 20 or 30 years—he could have walked over every step of that tiny island in a couple of years!

Anyway, there was a lot of that that we found. Often for the first time these were things that some of the ambassadors, at least, had never really wanted to concentrate on or had

Library of Congress

never done so—often because they were not particularly aware of it. AID was pretty much a self-supporting operation in these countries both in terms of policy as well as finances. The general attitude often seemed to be if they don't make waves leave them alone. There was little policy direction from the ambassadorial side.

However, we got about half way through there—down in South America at the time—and it turned out that this policy of Foreign Service Assistance Inspectors had been created pretty much within the Department of State and a few Hill staffers discovered it. I can't think of the man's name, one of the more senior political Hill type staffers—the ultimatum was issued by the staffer that we, the Congress, have abolished the Foreign Assistance Program and we don't expect the State Department to take it over. If we wanted it we would have maintained it or recreated it. So there was a lot of covering one's fanny back in Washington. All the voluminous reports that we wrote disappeared as far as I am aware without a trace.

Q: I don't understand. AID was still going on in these countries. What was it that they had abolished?

DWYER: There used to be a Foreign Service Assistance Inspection program that had its own set of inspectors. They were closer to what the inspectors are today, I am sorry to say, in the sense that they were auditors, and what have you. I am not sure whose idea this was originally in State, but the point was that, in his opinion, these are foreign policy tools and as such should be considered in the normal Foreign Service Inspection of how the whole embassy is operating or conducting American foreign policy in that country. It made a great deal of sense.

Q: I don't understand. Congress normally keeps a close eye on squandering of funds. You were out basically to look for programs that were not working weren't you?

Library of Congress

DWYER: Not really. We weren't auditors, obviously. We were just analyzing or summarizing what the American foreign assistance in a particular country looked like as viewed from American foreign policy for that country.

Q: But in a way even more an auditor would be more likely to look at it in small terms but less likely to say well this isn't really doing much for us as opposed to somebody like yourself. In other words, what I am saying is that you seemed to be going in with the idea of do we really need these things or not...

DWYER: Not so much do we really need it or not, but are these programs helpful to American foreign policy, and, of course, a lot of them weren't.

Q: But why would somebody in Congress be opposed to somebody doing that, because this would result in the ultimate diminution of American expenditures abroad.

DWYER: I can't answer directly for the Congressional staff that felt so strongly about it. Except, I would guess, that there were two things about it. First of all, if it were going to be done they didn't particularly want it done by State. We were considered State inspectors and we were looking at a whole bunch of other agency projects—the Peace Corps, all kinds of military assistance. And needless to say, for example, in the days of Pinochet and what have you this was a very tender subject. So, nobody on the Hill ever had a clue of what we were doing. I am not even sure that anyone on the Hill knew we were actually down there. We were not the only ones. The two of us were just down in South America. There were eight, nine or ten of us, I don't remember how many of us there were, scattered around the world in whatever inspection trips happened to be going out at the time. As I say, the reports were quietly filed in the circular file and that was that.

Q: Did you ever get any feedback from any of the ambassadors saying, "Gee I am glad you told me we got this. I tried to get rid of them after I heard about it..."

Library of Congress

DWYER: In the whole yes, very much so. We had generally a pretty good bunch of ambassadors down there in those days. Two of them in those four countries were brand new and I think the inspection was particularly helpful in those cases. But this was a part of the overall Foreign Service Inspection. A new part, but a part nonetheless. We made our presentations along with the rest of the inspectors at the final interview with the ambassador. He got reports of it, and indeed there were one or two ambassador that I corresponded with quietly a couple of months or longer after I came home. Again, I think it served to bring some of these AID programs, or assistance programs I should say, into perspective for these four ambassadors. There were others that were old hands and—Harry Shlaudeman for example was in Lima at the time and I don't think there was much about the embassy that the inspectors could tell Harry. Still it was a time when the assistance program in Lima was the subject of considerable question as to policy, particularly with the Peruvian government at the time that was buying a lot of East bloc weaponry.

Q: It was a junta, but left wing rather than right, wasn't it?

DWYER: Well, I have almost given up saying these things are right or left wing. Call it radical. Left wing certainly in the sense that they were buying things from the East bloc, but whether it was because of the ideological conviction or the fact that the western countries wouldn't sell it to them.

But the question always arises to what extent do you or should you use your humanitarian assistance, economic assistance as a tool to attempt to get the government to change their policy on other things. There has always been, I think, particularly on the political side of the State Department and Congress, the feeling that we have more leverage with some of our aid programs than we actually do. We have leverage with programs that can put money in coffers, but not very many of the dictators or military officers are going to worry too much if a program to enhance the agricultural situation of the highland or plateau

Library of Congress

Indians continues or not. There is not much leverage there. And secondly, you only get to spend this leverage once.

Q: When you went out did you have the feeling that you were representatives of a new administration, this was the Carter Administration. Human rights were big on their agenda. Did you have the feeling that you were going out and looking at things in a different light than say the Nixon-Ford...

DWYER: No. Human rights were indeed important there, but that really was not what we were looking at at all. We were simply looking at the expenditure of resources in the United States mission in a country to determine whether or not it matched what our policy was towards that country—if indeed we could find a policy towards that country.

Q: Then what happened when you came back?

DWYER: Well, we were simply dismantled. We were walking the halls looking for jobs. I stayed on for a few months for a special inspection that I found rather interesting. The Security Division had problems at that time with their program for the security of the Secretary of State. There is a special section...

Q: You are talking about the Secretary's personal security, right?

DWYER: I am talking about SY. Yes, personal security and what have you. There was a branch, and still is, I presume, with about 25 to 30 officers who are assigned to protect the Secretary of State. These are the people like the Secret Service who protect the President. What had happened was two things. Security, of course, with an exception in the early '60s had never been staffed by regular Foreign Service Officers per se, but with people brought in under special programs who had special qualifications and met special criteria. There was a revamping of the security system a couple of years before that time and they had brought in a remarkably good looking group of young security officers. Everyone had a college degree and there were one or two of them that I interviewed that had Ph.D.s.

Library of Congress

Q: I was with the Board of Examiners and we were doing some of the screening of that group.

DWYER: They were good young people—not all so young either as there were some in their '30s with police backgrounds. The Secretary's detail, I suppose had a certain cachet to it, but after a couple of years of standing in the Secretary's backyard all night they begin to think of where do we go from here. The fact was that the Security Division simply did not have room to promote these people. There were a few slots that would be journeymen slots, supervisory slots, they could aspire to but there were not very many of them. Secondly because this thing had been started a few years before and the Security Division expanded, on occasion people of the same rank were reviewing officers of the same rank as themselves. Therefore they were writing efficiency reports on people that they would compete with for promotion, which was undesirable.

The head of Security at that time had decided that he wanted to replace the chief of the Secretary's detail and he did it remarkably and aptly. In the first place, the chief of the Secretary's detail was a long time security officer. His efficiency reports were uniformly good including reviews written by the head of Security. One would think that any good bureaucrat would realize that he should be careful about trying to fire the guy that sits in the front of the Secretary's limousine everyday, because this guy has access that nobody in security has had ever before or since. When they tried to move this fellow to permit one of the newer, younger—they found themselves threatened with grievance procedures. Secondly, a very irate Secretary of State who asked the Director General to try and straighten out this mess.

That took two or three months. We finally got the head of Security to agree to find this guy a position that was at least equal in importance and supervisory responsibilities that he would grudgingly accept. But more important as we got into it we uncovered the deep unhappiness of the whole detail which went far beyond our mandate. Once these younger officers found there was someone there who would listen to them—I think I had about

Library of Congress

everyone in there pouring out their troubles. I don't know if we did them any good or not, but we tried. It was rather interesting concept. The then head of Security who was trying to make this into a modern agency—his motives were excellent and you can sympathize with him, but in a bureaucracy you simply can't fire a man without apparent reason or move them to a job...

Anyway, after a job or two like that I was walking the halls trying to find myself a job. John Burke, who was then our ambassador in Guyana, was in the Department looking for a DCM. I had known John very slightly when he was head of the Vietnam working group, or deputy head, when I was on Scandinavian affairs. The Vietnamese working group was very unhappy with the Scandinavians in general, so we had some contact there. We had been back in Washington—we returned from Chad in '77 and by now it is the spring of '78 and Andy Young had visited Guyana. He was the Ambassador to the United Nations. He got along very well with the then Deputy Chief of Mission in Guyana and offered him a job at the UN as his office manager for him for the US Mission. He needed a Foreign Service Officer that he liked and could trust. So this fellow left and John Burke was looking for a new DCM. He offered me the job and although I really didn't want to go to Guyana under the best of circumstances...

Q: It is not the garden spot...

DWYER: It is not the garden spot. I had a daughter in prep school—while in Africa we had an education allowance and hardship allowance which allowed me to send her away to school. When she came back to the United States we again put her in prep school because we didn't know where we would be. So financially it looked like a good deal and there didn't seem to be much else around. And besides I rather preferred to serving in the field than Washington anyway. John Burke was someone I thought I could work with reasonably and easily. So we had a conversation and he said if interested he needed me right away. My long suffering wife said okay you go down and I will close up the house again and have it painted after the last tenants. I agreed that I would come back for a week

Library of Congress

in June for the in-laws 50th wedding anniversary and finish helping her. And that was what we did. John was agreeable to this. I came back from Guyana for a week in June and brought the family back with me.

In the various briefings that I had in Washington before going to Guyana—by this time I had been out before as a DCM and had been a Desk Officer for several years and arranged briefings for everyone and was at home with the process knowing whom to see—I think I covered all the bases.

I would say the largest question about my tour in Guyana, or most significant event, was the tragedy of Jonestown, the group of people up at Jonestown—American citizens living there—came up in my briefings only once or twice. The ambassador mentioned them to me in his briefings saying that they were up there and that would be something for me to keep an eye on when we got down there. The Desk Officer had visited Jonestown in Guyana and was besieged by letters, he said, from the People's Temple and those opposed to the People's Temple—as a matter of fact he had a window sill full of letters that he hadn't gotten around to opening yet. His view was that it was something that I would have to make up my own mind about. I asked what kind of responsibilities did we have for these people. He said, “Well, we don't really have very much as long as they are there willingly, obviously.” And lastly, the then chief of the consular section was up on business to Washington when I was getting my briefings and he had made two or three visits down there and described a little bit about what the settlement looked like and what his consular responsibilities were there.

In effect, however, I must say that I didn't think of it in terms of the kind of a problem that it was going to turn out to be, obviously. It was more curiosity than anything else. The consular officer had told me that he had on his regular visit up there talked to people and knew of no one that wanted to leave. Certainly no one had told him. He periodically had conversations with everyone up there whose relatives had inquired about. So then it didn't seem to me to be that important.

Library of Congress

Q: Were you getting either through the people or hall gossip or people saying don't touch this thing, it is a can of worms. What you have here is a black activist, Jim Jones...

DWYER: He's not black. Nor was his leadership black.

Q: But I thought this had a black...

DWYER: Well, most of the people at Jonestown were black, but not the whole leadership. Except for the head of his security and one or two others, they were all white.

Q: Were people saying, look this is...

DWYER: Nobody was saying anything.

Q: ...Look this is a real political mess, I mean these people have very good California political connections, whatever you do, just stay away from it.

DWYER: No, nothing like that. I don't think anybody in the Department, including where it should have been of the most interest, namely the Consular Affairs section, had paid any attention to it. I think the only one paying any attention to it really were the people in and around the Desk, if only because they were being besieged by well-organized campaigns of letters.

Q: What was the letter campaign about?

DWYER: I didn't really know. None of this was I aware of at the time, I must say. Not until I got down there and then well after that. The major case there was the question of a child—who were the parents of this child and who should be awarded custodianship or guardianship of the child. That was the thing that I was to discover that the Embassy had spend as much or more time on it.

Library of Congress

It was a case of aides to Jim Jones, again, both white, who were married—Tim Stone and his wife. Stone was a lawyer, who had, I think, previously been assistant DA in Los Angeles, and a member of the People's Temple. They had a child. The question was whether the child was fathered by Tim Stone or by Jim Jones. Jim Jones maintained that he was the father—so did Tim Stone's wife, Grace, for a certain period of time. Stone left the People's Temple. His wife Grace stayed behind. Then she left the Temple. They then attempted to get custodianship of this child in Guyana that Jim Jones said was his child and maintained his mother was not a competent mother. Now there had been documents signed, I believe, by Mrs. Stone saying that Jim Jones was the father. Anyway it was a...

Q: It was a typical consular case.

DWYER: It was a typical consular mess of the worst kind possible.

Q: But nothing earth shaking.

DWYER: Well, you know I think these are the dirtiest jobs of the consular officer. I was never really a consular officer for very long, but the cases that were the most heartrending and difficult certainly were child custody cases.

The case had been brought before the courts in Guyana and was to be cited by the Supreme Court of Guyana. But before I left Washington, I am not actually sure I had heard the name, although I may have heard that there was a child custody case down there that the Embassy was trying to insure that the courts heard promptly and fairly. But as I say this was not at all a major part of my briefing at the time or my preparations.

At the time I was going down there the central electric system in the city of Georgetown, the capital, had failed. They were finding it impossible to keep running. Not only did you have problems simply with drinking water, but the hospitals had no electricity, although some of them had backup generators, they couldn't get fuel because the country was going broke—and still is—but the water system was down because it depended on the

Library of Congress

electricity. Georgetown is some six to eight feet below sea level and the pumps that pump the water—I should say that Georgetown is on the sea coast. Immediately behind Georgetown are swamps from which Georgetown gets its fresh water, and which in effect washes out the town's sewage system. At low tide the pumps go on and the water in the canal is pumped out into the sea. The gates of the dams are then closed and the water comes in from the back of the town from the reservoirs which not only supply drinking water, but more importantly are an important factor in the cleanliness of the town.

We had established a task force in Washington with the Office of Emergency Preparedness, or whatever it is now, and included a couple of army engineers, particularly one or two people from the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. I must say their portrait of what could happen to Georgetown and Guyana without electricity and the probability of communicable diseases was really rather scary. In effect, what we finally did was to bring down a team to refurbish a couple of generators that we had sold the Guyanese many years before and been allowed to deteriorate—these were railway diesels and the railway diesels, of course, generate electricity and these were emergency supplies. I spent a great deal of my time with this task force before we went down there. The Embassy at the time was considering whether to evacuate unnecessary staff and dependents because of the water situation. Also it was leading to civil unrest. People were digging up water mains from the ground and knocking holes in them to get at the water, thereby getting a few cups of water maybe but in effect destroying the water and sewage system, which unfortunately had little or no maintenance since the British had left fifteen years before. Anyway, that was what I would say I spent most of my time on.

I arrived in Guyana in April of '78 and found it not an unpleasant town. It was certainly no body's garden spot of delights but the Guyanese themselves were certainly amongst the most attractive people that I had ever served with—open and friendly.

[interruption}

Library of Congress

Q: Now, where were we?

DWYER: I had just arrived in Guyana. We had a small mission there. The political section was two or three officers; a consular section with three or four officers; an economic section which was a one man section, plus the help of one of our two interns—I guess the consular section was a little bigger, there must have been half a dozen, I guess. We were understaffed the whole time I was there, which was not surprising in Guyana. There was a fairly large AID mission which had been going to be reduced considerably and had indeed been reduced, but thanks to the Carter Administration and I suspect not a little part to Andy Young, it began to look as if our relations were going to improve a little bit with the Guyanese so our AID program was slowly being refinanced. Interestingly enough, although we had cut off a large part of new funds to the AID program we didn't lose any of the officers down there. We had the whole staff there and we began again.

Guyana, then and now, was a mix of people and races. Depending on how you count, some 52 percent East Indians, some 40-odd percent black, another 5 percent of mixed type including some Chinese, Portuguese, and a very small number, I would guess less than 1 percent of Western Europeans or British who had stayed on. There had been riots which preceded independence immediately and indeed independence had been pushed off for some time.

The East Indian population largely voted in block for a leader who was Cheddi Jagan. Jagan was an American educated dentist who had married an American citizen, Janet, during his years at Northwestern. He was head of the pseudo-communist party of Guyana, and certainly took his marching orders from Moscow. The Soviets had a large embassy there as did the Libyans, Chinese and various other third world countries as Guyana saw itself as a third world leader. Jagan was, I suspect, probably a very sincere radical socialist, or communist or whatever. However, by far the brightest one of the family was his wife, Janet, who had served as a minister in the government at one point before independence when Jagan had been Prime Minister. He and Janet were a working team.

Library of Congress

I haven't looked down there recently, I don't know what has happened to them. I must do so.

Q: But when you were there...

DWYER: These were the opposition. With independence, Forbes Burnham, a charismatic black leader, had become Prime Minister and stayed Prime Minister for indefinitely until his death. I guess he became President towards the end there, if I recall correctly.

But in essence the East Indian population in Guyana were composed of the sugar plantation laborers, the farm laborers, and the agricultural people. There were some business people in the East Indian population, although the Portuguese and Chinese were prominent there too. What had happened was that when slavery was abolished in 1834, all through the Caribbean—and although Guyana is on the mainland of South America, it is really more a Caribbean country than a South American one—when the British abolished slavery in 1834 the plantation owners all over the Caribbean were looking for new laborers because almost en masse the blacks left the plantations where they could. On some of the small islands, of course, they couldn't get away. But in Guyana they sure could and they just walked off the plantations in large part. There was an attempt to bring in Portuguese largely from the Canary Islands. They did not remain laborers very long and became small merchants, grocery store owners, jewelry store operators—if throughout the Caribbean today, all the big jewelry stores still are, for some reason, Portuguese.

Next they tried the Chinese. They lasted a little longer than the Portuguese. And finally the East Indians, both Pakistani and Indian—Moslems and Hindu. That proved much more successful. They were brought over in groups so that they maintained their own civilization, language and religion, which the blacks when they were slaves were never permitted to do. It was illegal to teach a black to read, it was illegal in many cases to convert them to religion, etc. The idea being that there should be no organizing force. So,

Library of Congress

in addition to the fact that the blacks were brought from a variety of regions of Africa and did not have the cohesiveness of the East Indians...

Q: But the situation when you arrived, I am trying to focus more on...

DWYER: Yes, well, by this time the black population ran the government, ran the army, a large part, but not all, of the law profession, and the school teachers and the bureaucracy. The East Indians were the agricultural laborers and merchants, and part of the law fraternity.

Q: When you arrived there, what did you see as our interest in the place other than just maintaining a presence?

DWYER: Probably the most important consideration of American foreign policy, the Carter Administration included, was that there be more or less tranquility in this area. Cheddi Jagan was an avowed follower of Moscow, if not an avowed communist, although he said once or twice that he was proud to take his line from the communists. The British, before they left, had really not wanted to turn the country over to Jagan. The Americans and the Brits, had supported Forbes Burnham in the early days of independence.

Q: I'm still trying to get us back to when you arrived.

DWYER: Okay, you don't want a history of Guyana.

Well, in any event, when we got there Forbes Burnham had been in power since independence. Elections generally were nicely and politely rigged. Cheddi Jagan had problems, one of which was that Forbes Burnham was a hell of a lot smarter than Cheddi Jagan. One political anecdote that I always remember was an exchange in parliament between Cheddi Jagan, the leader of the opposition, and Forbes Burnham, Prime Minister, when the government had been caught open-handedly, flagrantly, in some political misdeed. Jagan got up and said, "Mr. Prime Minister, I think no one in this country will

Library of Congress

disagree with me when I say that you have been caught with your trousers down.” The Prime Minister arose and said, “Well, be as it may be, but at least if I have been caught with my trousers down, there is something to see.”

So you had a country that had a high level of education. The British educational system had been excellent. Burnham, himself, was a lawyer, he had gotten his law degree at the Inns of the Temple in London, he had been a Guyana scholar. Every year in the British colonies in those days they chose one scholar to be the scholar of the country and Forbes Burnham had been that. He was articulate and knew how to appeal to the black masses.

Q: Well, did we see any...

DWYER: Our problem there was, and it wasn't that much of a problem—what we didn't want was a Cuba on the coast of South America. Burnham had not gotten in recent years the kind of economic and financial support that he had hoped to get from the United States. His politics were becoming increasingly unsavory...

Q: You mean in terms of corruptness and...

DWYER: Yes. The country was riddled by corruption—moral and economic. To get along you had to know who to see and how to see it. If you wanted your son or daughter to go away to school somewhere to a university and needed foreign exchange, well, you were careful not to speak out against the government too publicly.

Our American concerns were, as I said, number one the stability of an anti- or at least non-communist government in the area. We didn't want to see Cheddi Jagan become a Prime Minister. We believed at the Embassy at that time that the Soviet and Libyan embassies were centers for intelligence and perhaps the worst for that area of the Caribbean, to say nothing of the Cuban embassy, of course. There was a large Cuban presence. Burnham liked to think of Castro as a peer—a fellow third world leader.

Library of Congress

Secondly, the only real economic interests we had in Guyana was the fact that the United States' steel mills were supplied with 80 percent of their calcine bauxite from Guyana. Burnham had nationalized the bauxite mines. With the usual Guyanese unhappy luck he nationalized them just before the bottom dropped out of the market, but he was in effect making payments on it. They were at least attempting to make payments on it, so we had no real problem there. I think, if the truth be told, the aluminum companies, Alcoa, Reynolds and Alcon, probably were happy to get out.

Calcine bauxite is a particular kind of bauxite. It is used to make refractory bricks used in steel mills. The only other source of calcine bauxite at that time was China which was equally doubtful. Of course, as the steel industry modernized, there was less and less need for this kind of bauxite. Secondly, as I mentioned before, the whole of the aluminum industry at that time was bottoming out and the American economy was slowing down. So the importance of this was not all that earth shaking.

So those were our two main interests there in addition to trying to assist a country to modernize.

Q: So, I guess, probably we ought to turn to how, from your prospective, did the Jonestown episode play out.

DWYER: Well, Jonestown was up in the bush in the northwest portion of the country—150 miles by chartered airplane from Georgetown. There were no commercial communications with the area at Jonestown which was located at a small town called Port Kaituma. Port Kaituma was an inland port on the river that had been established by an American mining company for manganese. There were manganese mines to the northwest of Port Kaituma. Guyana is one of the few, perhaps the only country of the Caribbean, if not South America, that is not overpopulated. There were 7 or 800,000 Guyanese there and largely along the coast—largely agricultural still. The inland was very thinly settled. There were some ranches up in the Rupununi where Guyana borders Brazil.

Library of Congress

Q: So the communications were ...

DWYER: Jonestown, itself, was settled in an area of Guyana which was a territorial dispute with the Venezuelans. Venezuela claimed a large portion of that country. I don't know for a fact, but I would presume that one of the reasons that this area was open to Jim Jones and his People's Temple was the fact that the government probably thought that a settlement of Americans up there might not be a bad thing in terms of their territorial disputes with Venezuela.

Q: How long had Jonestown been there when you arrived?

DWYER: Oh, I should have read up on these things, I don't remember now. I think it was about '76—two years. It was not the first settlement of its kind up there. There had been another American settlement of a similar nature that hadn't made a go of it and failed. There had been at least one or two groups of Jamaicans that had undertaken such things and had largely reverted to growing marijuana and dreadlocks.

The Jonestown settlement was the only one which came in with a sizeable amount of money and organizational ability. Jones, himself, had come down to the settlement in 1977—the reasons why he came and brought the people was something I learned afterwards rather than before.

Q: We should probably not concentrate so much on that because if somebody is interested they can read up on that, I am mainly interested in how we saw it at the time and what happened.

DWYER: Shortly after I got there, Ambassador Burke suggested that one of the first things I ought to do was visit Jonestown along with the chief of the consular section, Dick McCoy. I went up there shortly after I got to Georgetown. There were, I suppose, 900 to a thousand people there at the time.

Library of Congress

We always had problems getting up there. I come from a family whose father and brothers have always flown light aircraft and had such aircraft in the family. I was used to flying around the countryside in small airplanes. But I was not at all happy given the tropical weather conditions of sending any consular officer up there in a single engine airplane. So we always tried to have two fans on whatever we chartered to go up there. We could have, and occasionally did, the consular officer go up to a settlement, where there was a manganese mine, north of Port Kaituma, and then take a little railway that had been established to bring the ore down to the port, but this was a chancy thing and it would take the better part of 5 or 6 days to do. Whereas, if we chartered an airplane we could go up there in an hour and a half. There was an airstrip about six or seven miles from the settlement, itself. If we could rely on the single government landrover up there to take us out to Jonestown that was what we did. So there was considerable logistic planning to get out there. We would have to beg, borrow or otherwise find an airplane to charter.

Anyway, McCoy and I went up there shortly after I got there. With all these preparations this was not something that you could walk into unannounced. There was simply no way that you could walk into Jonestown unannounced. Jonestown had a headquarters in Georgetown, itself, staffed by half a dozen to fifteen people. They were very, very active in keeping their problems before the local government—from the Customs to the Chief of Police to the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, for example, had a wife who was very ill and she had been carefully befriended by two or three women from the Jonestown settlement who lived in Georgetown. They would visit her every other day or so; talk with her and bring her an occasional gift of goodies that were not available. After she died, he was eternally grateful to the People's Temple for the kindnesses they had shown his wife. This was the kind of thing they did. That on one level and on another level they went out and seduced the Guyanese Ambassador to the United States—gave him a live-in friend, who stayed with him until he shot her dead a couple of years after Jonestown. So from the seductress to the decent people helping out a sick woman they pretty much covered all their bases. Again, I was far from aware of all these things before

Library of Congress

we got up there. But people in Georgetown had a pretty good intelligence as to what was going on.

When McCoy and I got up there that first day I can't think when it was—April or May—but in any event they had obviously put on a little show for my benefit. McCoy had been up there a few times previously, but they had organized in their pavilion, there main meeting place, bits of their handicrafts, what they grew, what they made, arranged a tour of the facilities for me. Very much a dog and pony show.

Jonestown, itself, as I said was six or seven miles from Port Kaituma, while there were no fences around it or barbed wire as its detractors maintained in drawings and text, it was nonetheless isolated. For city people, which a large percentage of Jonestown rank and file were, the tropical forest was unquestionably daunting.

Jonestown did include a number of people who were farmers. Ironically, Jim Jones came from a small town in Indiana, Muncie, Indiana, not far from where I grew up in the northern part of the state and I wouldn't be surprised if we met one another in some high school exchange in those days. But he had started out with a bunch of people who often were farmers. They would follow him from California and then to Guyana. These were the people who ran his farm down there.

They had built a bunch of cabins. A subsequent consular officer said it reminded him of his first day at summer camp. It was badly overcrowded at that time, although, I must say, it was not apparent to me. It was overcrowded because there had been a small group of Temple people who had come down to build the camp. And then when Jones came down he brought with him almost everyone from Los Angeles so there was an influx of several hundred people and they were still building dormitories.

Dick McCoy conducted his consular business with his usual competence and efficiency. He had a meeting of all the People's Temple members there who were new parents and had babies. He told them how to register their children as American citizens; how

Library of Congress

to register their marriage or arrange for recognition of their relationship, etc. He also interviewed privately every person up there that had been a source of concern to relatives and parents in the States. I don't know how many of these cases there were, probably a half a dozen or a dozen each time.

Meanwhile I was making the grand tour and it was a kind of weird experience. Jonestown had, I presume they bought, but they may have been given a half hour or a forty-five minute program on the Georgetown radio at least once a week—maybe more often. It was a publicity and propaganda type thing of what they were doing with forests, how many acres they had cleared, what they had grown, how they were establishing their big farm, their chicken ranch, cattle, how they were developing new crops, etc. It sounded very impressive on the radio. Indeed at first glance, Jonestown, itself, was very impressive. It reminded me of the early days in a kibbutz in Israel. There was still a great deal of that enthusiasm. What was weird was that as they were taking me around to look at these things, these things were being described in exactly the same words I had heard on the radio program just the week before. In other words, they were rote.

Still, Jim Jones' wife had been a nurse and her particular interest was the children center and nursery and obviously there were infants there, fat and happy and well cared for. Their school system appeared quite decent. This had been a bone of contention between the Guyanese and Jonestown. The Guyanese Minister of Education's nose was out of joint that these people should establish a school of their own when Guyana had abolished all private schools a few years before.

There problem was that the tropical soil is good for a couple of years of crops and then it is leached out. It is very thin. The tropical forest is not a fertile place for crops. This was what all the sugar and tobacco planters in Guyana had found. They had been established along the rivers as was Jonestown and when the rivers gave out they moved to the coast where the tidal water changes that I described before had been used to refertilize the soil.

Library of Congress

Jones, himself was not a very practical man in the sense of getting things done or understanding practicality. He was an idealist or maybe a pragmatist who relied on ideology to move other people. He described to me a machine that his people were making that was going to use garbage to produce methane gas. With methane gas they would run their caterpillar tractors, tractors and what have you. He went on at length how they had made in the jungles of Guyana major scientific advances on this concept. Obviously there is a concept and it can be done. The fact is, however, that still in an industrialized society this often costs far more than the fossil fuel it is to replace.

Anyway, he continued on about this and turned to this fellow and asked where is the machine. It turned out he was leaning his hand on it while he was talking to me. He didn't recognize what he had been talking about!

At lunch someone came up and Jones excused himself saying he had something he had to take care of. I was left with Marcy Jones, his wife. She used that opportunity to make what had obviously been a preplanned presentation to me on the subject of the child about whom there was a custody battle saying that Jim Jones had fathered this child with her permission. That they had done it for the mental health of the mother and they recognized that it was a horrible mistake and should never had been done. But the child was growing up happy and well and well educated and not the child of a broken home as he would have if he had been returned to one or other of his parents, etc. It was a most uncomfortable twenty minutes for any political officer.

Marcy Jones continued after saying that the child custody situation was one that they regretted and that Jim Jones was indeed the true father of the child with her permission, to indicate that she, of course, couldn't really say with any certainty herself, but Jim Jones was not only a man of genius but many people firmly believed, including people there, that he could and had worked miracles—hands on faith healing, etc. This had been, indeed, an embarrassing situation for the Catholic hierarchy in Georgetown where a Jesuit priest had loaned them a Catholic church and in the best traditions of somewhat fraudulent

Library of Congress

fundamentalism Jim Jones had pulled out the cancers, chicken livers, what have you, of sick people in the Catholic church which did not endear him any longer to the editor of the local Catholic newspaper who was the guy who had loaned him the church.

Anyway, this was obviously their presentation to me as DCM coming up there and I have no doubt that it was carefully orchestrated but then again I would have been very surprised had it not been carefully orchestrated. The kinds of allegations that were made against Jonestown, made by relatives and friends of people there who had organized themselves on the west coast, I forget what it was called, but it was a formal organization, was that people were being kept at Jonestown against their will. That they were being mistreated, overworked, and suffering from malnutrition.

You mentioned earlier that this was still in the Carter Administration. We were operating in the Foreign Service under a very strict set of rules, or more conscientiously than in the old days. We were forbidden, for example, to record any telephone calls that the Embassy got. This was worldwide not just Guyana directives. We were told that the American citizens had the same rights of privacy as they did in the United States. In other respects as well, we were conscientiously trying to walk a very narrow line between these two opposing groups. The Jonestown people, as far as we could see, were not physically abused. They were wiry and there was no question that they worked hard to accomplish what they did, but none maintained that they were forced to do so or leave. None of the people that McCoy interviewed privately expressed a desire to leave. One of the principal aides of Jim Jones, a woman named Maria—I can't remember her last name, thought I would never forget it—came from a Greek family. Her father and brother in California were very, very much concerned about her. Before my arrival in Guyana, I know the father had traveled to Guyana to see her daughter. He wanted to see her outside of Jonestown. She had come to Georgetown and had had an interview with her father. McCoy was there as was one or two other people. She said in no uncertain terms that she did not want to go back to the United States. She was happy where she was, and even went so far as to accuse her father of sexual abuse when she was a child. Maria was atypical in the sense that she was

Library of Congress

one of the leaders and organizers of the People's Temple. Her father remained convinced that if he could possibly get her away into a home environment back in the State, she might radically change. I met her only once or twice. She was an attractive woman but with fire in her eyes. Someone who devoutly believed in her cause whatever it may have been, and I suspect in Jim Jones. Allegedly she had been his mistress, he changed mistresses with some frequency, but Maria was still a senior member of his staff.

This was the kind of thing that the People's Temple did quite often. They had their members sign or write and say accusations against family and parents or others that were quite shocking—childhood abuse was one of the greatest. You can imagine then, here is the Embassy in the middle of this case, the father who wants his daughter back and the daughter who is over 21 and says she has no current animosity towards her father but she doesn't want to go back and besides that she was molested as a child. Obviously these are not things for embassies to decide. They are legal matters.

Others were much more simple in the sense that a mother would write and say I haven't heard from my child for a long time would you please talk to them and tell them to write me. Undoubtedly there was a censorship in Jonestown. We now know that people were told what to write to parents and friends. But still very few of them, I suspect, ever wanted to leave or expressed an opinion to an Embassy officer or anyone else that they wanted to leave until the day of the tragedy of Jonestown.

So, McCoy and I went back to Georgetown. We talked with Ambassador Burke and relayed our impressions. I think what many of us had anticipated then and in the future was that this whole thing could well fall apart at the seams and we would have a thousand Americans at the door of the Embassy who needed support to get home and maintenance. That was our worse case scenario, I think. There had been one case before I got there of a guy who had left Jonestown and said that he had been beaten while there. He probably had been.

Library of Congress

The people at Jonestown were a mix. The large proportion of them were urban black, many from the ghettos. There were many elderly people there that were called the seniors. These undoubtedly had an attraction for Jones because they had Social Security benefits that were sent to them in Guyana which they would then endorse. The money went to the People's Temple. It was a matter of concern to the Social Security Administration late in the day when some of the publicity began to appear. I talked to two or three of the older people there on my first visit—just casually, off hand. I found that they were highly supportive of Jones. One old lady told me that where she lived in Watts she was afraid to go down to her mailbox to get her Social Security check because the gangs would be waiting on Social Security day for people to do that. While in Jonestown she had people to take care of her and didn't have to worry about her physical security and indeed she had trouble walking and a young child was always with her every day.

I couldn't say, certainly, that I had had expressed to me any unhappiness with Jonestown. It was a weird place, but the mere fact that they would choose to establish themselves a 150 miles into the bush was weird to begin with.

To continue the Jonestown side of things, to go over it fairly rapidly, the Embassy continued to get requests from parents and relatives to look in on people. We continued to do so. We tried to get up there at least once every quarter which we generally did until later in the summer of '78. We had a new consul by that time, McCoy had gone back to be Desk Officer in the Department at the urging of Ambassador Burke who wanted someone on the desk who knew about Jonestown which was beginning to look increasingly as a problem. The Embassy sent in to the Department in early summer or late spring a telegram describing the situation with Jonestown as best as we could see it. In essence the telegram said that as far as we can tell, Jonestown is a state unto itself. There is very little supervision over it by the Guyanese government. And recommended that the Embassy go in and urge the Guyanese government to monitor the situation up there more

Library of Congress

carefully so that they as well as we could be more responsive to complaints that were coming.

These complaints, I might add, were all orchestrated. There were complaints on both sides. The Jonestown people complained about being harassed by the American Embassy, about being the subject of a CIA plot, that there had been shots fired at them by would be terrorists from the families, etc. There was no middle ground. You had two polarized camps here.

In any event, after some urging we finally got a reply from Washington saying that we don't think you should make any representations to the Guyanese government at this time as it might be considered interference with the government of Guyana. Somewhere about then we were notified that a congressional delegation would be coming to see us. This would be a delegation of two or three congressmen led by Congressman Leo Ryan of California, whose district included a number of constituents both among the relatives and amongst the people in Jonestown itself. But looking back on it it was amazing how little we knew about what had happened in California with the People's Temple or about Ryan or what he knew or for that matter what Consular Affairs in the Department of State knew.

Ryan had been a high school teacher and had a friend whose grandchildren were at Jonestown and who was very concerned about them. The father of these children had been killed in an alleged accident in a railroad yard in Los Angeles. The suspicion being but never proved that the People's Temple were responsible for it—that it was in fact a murder. The mother had taken the children to Jonestown. So it was a very personal concern of Congressman Ryan's. And something else that I had been unaware of until he told us, John Burke and myself on his arrival, that he had a daughter who was very much involved in the Church of Scientology and he thought they did much good work. Thus he wasn't necessarily against all cults, but that he had had some experience with that. Subsequent to Jonestown, of course, the daughter became a follower of the Marisha Yelt where ever it was, Idaho or Wyoming—she was in another cult. It was interesting because

Library of Congress

this kind of devotion to the cult and to the leader were very similar to what you found at Jonestown. So Ryan had some, I presume, personal interest in this as well as his official interest. He had, of course, been well known for some highly publicized investigation of baby seals in Canada or Alaska. He had gone in as a prisoner at a high security jail in California for a week to experience what that was like. He had been a leader in getting the congress to pass a resolution urging the pardoning of Patty Hearst. In other words, a man who had had some experience with publicity and unusual ways to get it. Nonetheless his interest in Jonestown, I think, was very real.

But we knew very little about any of this when we simply got a telegram from Washington saying that this delegation is interested in coming down and are thinking of bringing a whole delegation—including a psychiatrist. We kind of looked at this thing and said to ourselves—what do these people think they are going to do about these people in Jonestown, tell them that they are now going to be subject to a congressional investigation and compulsory psychiatric exam or something. What we were never aware of until after the fact was that Leo Ryan and his principal aide, his legislative assistant, I never thought her name would slip my mind either (it will come back), had had a couple of briefings in the State Department. They had met with People's Temple in—or the parents extensively—in Los Angeles. They had extensive notes and information of the people up there in Jonestown. Piecing it together later it became apparent that Congressman Ryan could not get any other member of his committee to go with him to Guyana. Everybody else had backed out, one at the last moment. Such official congressional visits, or committee visits, were normally to be conducted by two congressmen, which was part of the delay in their getting down there. He won his chairman's consent to go by himself with one committee staffer. The committee staffer by happenstance had been a former Foreign Service Officer who I knew slightly. He had gone through Russian language school when I had gone through Bulgarian language school.

Library of Congress

In any event on behalf of the congressman we relayed copies of letters from him that he had written directly or had given to the People's Temple lawyers stating his desire to visit Jonestown and meet with Jim Jones and talk to the people there.

Jonestown leadership, or Jim Jones, or somebody, organized a petition that they did not want this man to visit Jonestown. He had a conservative bias that would not permit him to understand the great socialist experiment that they were building as witness his voting record for Argentina, etc. Obviously they had quite a good dossier on him. In any event he was simply unwelcome. This petition was signed by several hundred people.

Ryan decided that he was coming, willy nilly. If he couldn't visit Jonestown so be it, but he was going to come to Guyana and try. At the same time we hadn't been up to Jonestown for longer than our usual period because for a number of weeks the landing strip was, according the civil aviation people, in bad condition and it was chancy because of the rains. We had been given numerous excuses by the People's Temple. Jim Jones was sick and was running a high fever and was in no condition to receive anybody. And this illness of Jim Jones' was an allegation that had been made for several months. Whether or not he was actually ill, whether he was, as some reports have it and probably accurately, abusing narcotics of some kind, or what have you, I don't know. I don't think we will ever know. The examination of the body after his death I don't think was conclusive on this, but it was intimated to us that he had cancer and was dying.

In any event the new consul finally got up there. We had asked McCoy to prolong his stay in Guyana and for the new consul to get there earlier so that McCoy could take him up. McCoy did show him around, but unfortunately we couldn't arrange the trip. The new consul went up shortly after McCoy left with another consular officer. He had never met Jones before. He came back and said Jones did indeed look sick and slurred his words, etc. Certainly his impression of Jones' health was different from my own when he looked like a healthy man to me. Jones had very, very black hair and there was a question as

Library of Congress

to whether it was dyed or not, and he continually wore dark glasses, giving him a rather unusual look. He was distinctive looking which I am sure he strived for.

Anyway, the new consul came back and his report on his visit did not, except for Jones' possible illness, differ materially from the reports of the previous consul. He had interviewed people; everybody said they were happy; nobody wanted to come back; he had interviewed them privately. He did, as the consular officer always did after such a visit, write the parents of these children or the relatives or whoever inquired. Of course, we had to get a release from these people to talk about them despite the fact that this might be somebody's son up there, and if he didn't wish to communicate with his parents there was nothing the United States government could do to make him do so. As a matter of fact we were distinctly forbidden to comment on his state of health or well being or anything else until we had a release from him. So we always asked the guy to sign a release, which they almost always did.

Ellis came back and, as the Consul did, he wrote up his reports on these people. However, other things caused some delay. Ironically, some of the people did not receive the letters saying that their relatives and children were in good health and happy until after the death notice of their children and relatives.

In the meanwhile Embassy Guyana was trying to figure out what the hell was coming off with Congressman Ryan— when he was coming, who would accompany him. When he decided that he would come, Jones and the People's Temple said they wanted him to be there at the same time as their two lawyers. One was Gary from California who has been a long time supporter of radical causes in California and had been the People's Temple lawyer for some years. He was an elderly man, white hair, not all of it his own, but carefully glued in place, and I suspect he was very much a sincere 1930s type radical lawyer.

The other lawyer that Jones wanted present had newly come to the People's Temple cause. This was a man named Mark Lane. He had written a book about the assassination

Library of Congress

of President Kennedy. He had been active in conspiracy causes and anything that made a great deal of publicity. He had come down to Guyana in the summer and visited Jonestown for the first time. After he came back from Jonestown to Georgetown, one of the People's Temple persons called me up and said that Mark Lane would like to meet me. I said, "Fine." Frankly I was vaguely aware that Mark Lane had a name somewhat better known, but I didn't really know who he was, but was happy to meet with him. They wanted to meet at a certain time the next day which was inconvenient for me. They couldn't meet any other time so I rearranged my schedule. In the meantime Lane had given a press conference in Georgetown implying, or perhaps actually stating, that the People's Temple were a bunch of dedicated, sincere, wonderful people who were being harassed by the United States government, including the CIA and the State Department. In other words another conspiracy.

Our public affairs officer at the Embassy attended the press conference, took notes and indeed it was recorded and is still around somewhere. [This part is a little more clear in my mind because I was asked two weeks ago to appear in a TV program with Mark Lane and I said no.] Lane said he had never seen such a wonderful community, it was progressing marvelously well, it was a paradise on earth—said Mark Lane two months before the Jonestown tragedy.

He didn't keep his appointment with me. I called the People's Temple up and asked what happened, was he coming over. They said, no, that Mr. Lane had decided not to because he does not think that the Embassy would hear what he has to say in an impartial fashion. I said, okay, and by happenstance I had a luncheon at the hotel where Lane was staying that day and went down there and saw the People's Temple representative with someone else and went up to him and said that I would be happy to reschedule the meeting if you need to do it. He said, "No, no, we don't see any purpose in this." I said, "Okay." Meanwhile this other fellow was standing there and he said, "By the way this is Mark Lane." I said, "How do you do?" He nodded without exchanging a word. So I left.

Library of Congress

We then went back to the planning. By this time the congressman was coming; Jim Jones wanted Lane to come back to Guyana; Lane said he couldn't come when the congressman could come; Gary had some scheduling problems; and finally Congressman Ryan said, "The hell with it, I'm coming and if you want your lawyers there you get them there."

In the interval the Foreign Minister of Guyana, Horashly Jackson, told Ambassador Burke in a conversation regarding Congressman Ryan's visit that the government of Guyana had no objection to the visit by Congressman Ryan and that they considered it a private visit. Congressman Ryan and the Embassy was to understand, however, that whether the People's Temple wanted to receive Congressman Ryan was completely up to the People's Temple and the individuals therein. As far as the government of Guyana was concerned, Jonestown was the home of these people and they would not permit anybody to force their way in.

By this time the idea of the psychiatrist and other staff members had somehow gone by the board. The Embassy was expecting a visit by Congressman Ryan, his legislative aide and a committee staffer. While talking to the manager of a hotel we learned that there was a whole bunch of reservations for the press. I personally called the acting director of Caribbean Affairs and asked if it was true that a whole bunch of press people were coming down. Obviously this is a small town with limited communications and there would be a lot of things we would have to do if we were going to get a lot of people. I was told flat out that no press would accompany Congressman Ryan. It might be that some press might come down on their own, but no "press" would accompany him.

When Ryan arrived and all the press got off the plane without visas I turned to the Ambassador and said, "I wonder what the hell they mean by not accompanying Ryan." We not only had press, we had NBC television crew, we had the Washington Post, we had the Hearst newspapers and a whole flock of people. And a whole flock of people with the usual arrogance of the American press or media who decided that the laws of this small country didn't really apply to the American press, therefore, they didn't need

Library of Congress

visas. They should be issued visas at the border. Currency controls didn't apply to them either. They could walk into the country with Guyanese currency that they bought at a discount, etc. Unfortunately, at the airport there was myself, the Ambassador and the administrative officer and, I guess, a consular officer with a couple of drivers. We didn't have the press guy there. We obviously should have, but it was 12:30 at night... Anyway, it was a real show. They refused to let some of these guys in. Others refused to enter the country if their friends were not allowed in. Others refused to leave their camera equipment in customs; of course, customs had long since closed. I am still irritated about it because these were all things that the Embassy could have solved had this jerk back in the Department been on his toes—he was our own jerk, he was not Consular Affairs, he was the Desk Officer. Consular Affairs, also could have told us, somebody could have told us. Anyway I was in no mood for the niceties.

We had also told the Department we have got a problem. What is it that we can tell the congressman about these people up there in view of the Privacy Act?

Q: I might add that the Privacy Act was fairly new and everybody was very sensitive about this at this time.

DWYER: We had to request special permission to record terrorist threats—nobody had taken into account about recording telephone conversations.

We were adamant. We wanted to cooperate with this guy but we wanted to know what we could tell him. What's more we wanted it in writing. It was like pulling teeth, but we finally got something out of them giving us some guidelines.

Q: When you say other departments, where was the problem coming from?

DWYER: God only knows. Consular Affairs or Legal Affairs. Basically what we were asking was what can we discuss with this man without infringing on the privacy of American citizens about whom we have been warned. I should also say that the People's Temple

Library of Congress

had a considerable effort there using the Information Act to obtain most everything that we sent back to Washington. They were continuously raising suits, not only the People's Temple but the parent. So basically we were...

Q: Working in a fish bowl.

DWYER: Yes, whatever we were writing we knew was going to come to the attention of all of these groups, except what was protected under the Privacy Act or something else. And I must say, the Embassy had no ax to grind whatsoever. All we wanted to know was what legally we were responsible for because otherwise we felt we would have legal problems about talking about things that were the private concerns and professional aspects of it.

Leo Ryan rode in the car with the Ambassador and I took his staffer and his legislative assistant along. His legislative assistant was not there as a formal member of the delegation. Her trip was supposedly paid for by the congressman, himself. She was there as his personal aide and not as a member of the congressional delegation nor as a member of the congressional staff.

I made, what I can only profess to be a faux pas, going back in the car because I said to the congressional staffer, the former Foreign Service Officer whom I had known in his previous existence—we were talking about how we were going to get up to Jonestown. I was telling him that this was not easily done. You know you want to go to Jonestown but you don't know when you want to go. We have to get an airplane from somebody. They are not that frequent down here. We tried to reserve the sugar cooperation's twin Cherokee for three days but that is out of the country being repaired. The only other decent twins around are elsewhere. First of all we have to have funds from the delegation if you want us to reserve an airplane. In essence what I was saying to him was, "In God's sake why didn't you plan this thing out a little better so we could have had all these things and the press in line." Well the congressional staffer was a bit of a non-entity because I soon found myself attacked with great vehemence on the flank by Ryan's legislative aide.

Library of Congress

This young lady was also a lawyer and it suddenly became very clear to me that my old acquaintance had nothing to do with this whatsoever. The powers to be were seating on my left.

Then we got into what we could tell the delegation. I said we were concerned about this—we had this directive from Washington. She said they would come and have a meeting with me in the morning. So they had a meeting with me in the morning and she said, “This is not my understanding of what we would be told by the Embassy from what the Consular Affairs told me.” I said, “Well, I don't know. I asked them what they told you and they said this is what they told you.” She said, “Well, in effect, I don't think that is accurate any longer.” I said, “Fine, draft something and I will be glad to send it back to the Department. If they want to change it they will.” It was too bad because it was a faux pas on my part because it was not an important question really. It turned out that they knew a hell of a lot more about these people than we did. I kick myself for adding a little friction...

Q: One has to look at the time. There was a whole change in government at that time. The whole idea of the privacy of the individual plus the fact that everything that you did would be wide open. This was all quite new and I think all of us were very aware of this and not feeling very loose about it.

DWYER: Certainly the change in administrations didn't make a great deal of difference, but the emphasis on the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information, the whole thing with secret recordings dating from Watergate, to say nothing of the anti-USA and everybody else, had made us more alert to such things possibly more than we would have been before. But the irony was that in fact there was very little that we could have told these people.

So, the congressman was staying with Ambassador Burke at the residence; the other members of his delegations were at the single decent hotel in town. Again there is a little irony there. Ryan and Ambassador Burke grew up not far from each other in Wisconsin. Both went to private Catholic day schools. Both had an Irish Catholic background. Burke

Library of Congress

was and is a very private person—the last one I could think of who would enjoy publicity of any kind, shape or form. Ryan was completely opposite—hale fellow, flamboyant, at his happiest in that.

Ambassador Burke had invited my wife and myself over for dinner with Congressman Ryan the day following his arrival. We got over there to find Ryan talking with a couple of people, at least one woman who had come down with him. I should say that Ryan arrived not only with the press, but a whole bunch of People's Temple relatives—I don't remember how many came down, 15 or 20 or so. He was anxious for Ambassador Burke to talk with this one woman who could tell him about when she knew Jim Jones in South America. Burke asked if she had any relatives in Jonestown. No, she had no relatives in Jonestown. Her whole thing was that she had known Jim Jones and came along because she felt it was her duty to do so. But she had no ties and Ambassador Burke felt very strongly that while he would gladly meet with relatives or parents or anybody he was not available to the general public in what was a terribly sensitive situation.

The lady finally went home and we had dinner with Ryan. Ryan told us about his friend whose grandchildren were up there. We explained some of our problems with people there. If in a private confidential conversation they say they are happy there and don't want to leave, we have no way to force them to leave. The American government has no way to take these children away from their mother in Jonestown and send them back to California. You can't do that from the State of New York, let alone Guyana. It would have to be, again, another legal case, which is again a sorry and sad way to do it, but there is no other way. Congressman Ryan said something to the effect that if they were my grandchildren I would figure out a way to get them back. And, indeed, I think he would have. The point being that he felt, I am sure, that the Embassy was paying too much attention to the niceties. And indeed, from his viewpoint, I suppose we were.

In the course of the next couple of days, Ryan and the members of the relatives who had come petitioned for agreement of the People's Temple to go up there to Jonestown. One

Library of Congress

night Ryan went over to the People's Temple headquarters in Georgetown and simply walked in unannounced. He said, "Hello, I'm the bad guy," and set forth his reasons for going to Jonestown and saying that he was not up there to find anyone guilty of anything, but that his constituents were complaining about a lack of response and he wanted to see what was happening to a bunch of American citizens, some of whom were his constituents.

A couple of days later we weren't much further along and Ryan said, "I'm going. We are going tomorrow." I said, "You are sure you are going?" And he said, "Yep." I was his control officer, incidentally, for the congressional visit—one, because we wanted somebody older with what was a very sensitive situation, and secondly, the natural selection for control officer would have been the consul but this was a man who was going, we thought, to have to work with these people subsequently in consular affairs and we didn't want to tar him with whatever happened on this congressional investigation. I said to the congressional staffer, "Okay, we will see if we can get an airplane." Our administrative officer was resourceful and he got the government of Guyana and Guyanese airways to agreed to take a Guyanese airliner out of service for the day and give it to the congressman. This was an Islander—a small two engine aircraft that flew to the interior of Guyana on a more or less regular schedule. I think it sat 18 people. The aide was saying don't commit yourselves until the last moment because we may have to cancel. I said, "Listen we are taking an airliner out of service for the day, we have to pay for it, if we want it we have to say so now." Finally I went to the congressman and told him it would cost him a couple thousand dollars if you want the airplane. He said, "Yes, get it." He paid for it out of congressional funds.

Now he had an airplane with 17 or 18 seats on it and he sold seats to the press and to a bunch of the relatives. So now we are going up to Jonestown not just with the congressman and his aides (in fact we left the committee staffer, who was the only other

Library of Congress

official member of the delegation back in Georgetown), but the news people and half a dozen of the relatives.

Q: Today is October 2, 1990. This is the third of a set of interviews with Richard Dwyer. Dick we just got you on the plane with Leo Ryan. Who was on the plane?

DWYER: Well, this was an Islander aircraft we rented from Guyanese Air company and had about 17 or 18 seats. Because it was a bigger plane than we needed for Congressman Ryan, he sold seats on the plane to the press people who had come down with him. This included a TV crew from NBC, they must have had 4 or 5 people, I guess, and a reporters from the Washington Post, and from the Hearst newspapers in San Francisco, and then there were a half dozen or so of relatives of the people at Jonestown who had come down with Congressman Ryan as well, plus Congressman Ryan's personal legislative assistant, Jackie Spears.

Q: This was a woman or a man?

DWYER: A woman.

The official delegation had consisted of Leo Ryan and a congressional staffer, Jim Scholart, but Scholart stayed in Georgetown and the congressman's own staff member, Jackie Spears, went up with him.

Q: Just one question before we move on. Did you get any impression from the members of the press, both TV and the papers that they were out for blood. That they were going to uncover some sort of a scandal—were they going to be aggressively looking for dirt?

DWYER: Hard to say. Where they all came from I am not absolutely sure. The newspaper people from San Francisco had been people familiar with the People's Temple for a number of years. This had been a continuing story there and so they were fairly

Library of Congress

knowledgeable and had a good idea of the organization and the background of it. I don't really know where the NBC TV crew came from.

Q: In their questions to you did you get a feel that they were out for blood or not?

DWYER: Not terribly. They certainly were nothing like what would hit us in a few days time. Then we had an incredible crew of unscrupulous and less than desirable media with the usual good ones, of course. But I think they were looking for a story and this was something exotic. To what extent Congressman Ryan and his office encouraged them to go along I don't know. He may have considered (purely speculation on my part) that a larger group of people were valuable not only for the publicity but perhaps to make the group more secure or safety conscious. We learned later that these people were very concerned about the visit up there.

Those on the plane also included the People's Temple two lawyers, Mark Lane and Gary.

There were many more relatives who had come down—relatives of people who were up there and some people who were not relatives but had been former People's Temple members or something who had come to Guyana with Leo Ryan. These relatives had apparently chosen representatives amongst themselves. Among those relatives we had a mother whose two sons were there; a brother of Maria's—a principal aid of Jones who had accused her father of molestation when he had traveled to Guyana before; a fellow from the National Enquirer, with everything that implied—as a matter of fact I think he had been to Guyana earlier and had appeared at our Embassy requesting help because his visa had expired and he wanted us to extend it, but we discovered that he was a British citizen and not an American so we sent him over to the British Embassy. That was the crew.

We left in the early afternoon. I was continually concerned about the time we were leaving because I knew that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to get up there, take the 1 # hour flight, and then probably 45 minutes over to the People's Temple, presuming transportation was there for us, and then to get back and out before dark. Dark comes

Library of Congress

in the tropics regularly all year long about 6:00 or so. The airline crew was subject to strict rules as to when they could take off. We had intended to leave in the morning, but negotiations were still continuing with the lawyers who said they did not want to go then, they wanted to go later or some other time. Finally Ryan said he was going and they could come if they wanted to come. Which they did. So, by the time we got out of there it was early afternoon.

As we flew up there the pilot called me up to the cockpit and said he had gotten word that the landing strip was unsafe to land on. This had been passed from someone in Port Kaituma to someone in Georgetown to the civil aviation authority. He tended to think that this might not be true so we made a couple passes at the airstrip once we got up there. This was just a little hard tarmac out in the middle of a clear place in the bush near the little village of Port Kaituma. We saw nothing there that indicated we couldn't land, so we landed.

We were met at the airstrip by a local government representative and a group of people from the People's Temple. The group of people from the People's Temple were unfriendly, to say the least. They had been usually careful to observe polite proprieties before hand, certainly with me and with other people from the Embassy, but there was a feeling this time that those things were lacking. They told the congressman that he was really not very welcome; this was an inconvenient time; that Jim Jones was not well, etc., etc.

The delegation from the People's Temple in a large truck, open ended dump truck, decided to go with the lawyers back to the People's Temple and discuss it further, I guess, with Jim Jones. Congressman Ryan began an informal press conference with the press saying that he was here and wanted to visit the People's Temple but this apparently would not be allowed. The government representative had said that it was up to the People's Temple as to whether they wanted to receive visitors or not. Anyway as he was beginning this little informal meeting with the press, the dump truck had come back. The people in the truck said that they had decided that they would take Congressman Ryan and myself

Library of Congress

and his aid and a government representative from the Ministry of Information, a press type fellow, back to the People's Temple, but that they would not take the press or the relatives.

Congressman Ryan told the relatives and the press that he would see what he could do about getting them to visit the People's Temple once he got there. So we drove out in the back of this dump truck. There still was a discussion going on principally between Mark Lane and the People's Temple representative about whether they should admit these visitors or not.

Q: Where did Mark Lane come down? Was he arguing to let the people in?

DWYER: Yes, he was and I think Gary was too. As a matter of fact I remember Mr. Lane's comments verbatim which was, "I would let them all in except maybe that prick from the State Department"—namely, me.

We arrived and were met by Marcy Jones, Jim Jones' wife, and warmly welcomed. We went over to the open walled pavilion which was the principal meeting place of the community and Marcy said that Jim Jones would be with us shortly. She said first of all that she would like to show the group around the community. It was an attempt to repeat the same kind of walk through of the community that they had provided me when I had been there previously in the spring. We walked through the school and, perhaps, the dispensary, and spent some time in Marcy's own project, the infant care facilities. Finally Congressman Ryan said, "This was all very interesting but my main purpose to visit here is to talk privately with members of your community about whom a number of my constituents are concerned."

With that we went back to the pavilion and their band was playing, they told us, in rehearsal for their second annual show that they were going to present in Georgetown. They had quite a bit of talent there that had the previous year in Georgetown been very warmly welcomed. There was a jazz band or rock band, a couple of vocalists of the quality

Library of Congress

that were hardly topnotch professional but were certainly impressive in Georgetown. Anyway this group was playing.

Congressman Ryan divided up a list of names between himself and his legislative assistant, Jackie Spears, about whom they had heard or had inquiries about. Later, well after the fact, I learned that they had prepared themselves very carefully. They had prepared flash cards that they could show the people they were interviewing that said if you want to leave nod you head, and things like that because they were concerned about, or thought the people they were interviewing might be concerned about recordings or something like that which, in fact, I don't think entered into the case. But they were prepared for that.

Marcy Jones agreed to call these people and have them interviewed, but it may take a little time because some of them may be working in the fields or something. Congressman Ryan said that would be fine.

They began the interviews. Interestingly enough, the first interview that Congressman Ryan did was with a young man whose mother had been terribly concerned about him and had been writing the Embassy for some time. He happened to be one of the members of the band, so Congressman Ryan took him aside and talked with him for 10 minutes or so. He came back and while waiting for the next person I asked Congressman Ryan how his interview went. He said, "Well, it was a little strange. He said he was very happy here and wanted to stay here. He didn't particularly want to see his mother. I said she was in Georgetown and had come a long way and why would he not let her come up to see him? He said if she wanted to he could not stop her but it was up to her." Congressman Ryan was obviously concerned about the interview and asked me to go talk to the boy as well. Which I did with largely the same results. The hierarchy of the People's Temple maintain that the boy's mother was upset because he had married a black girl and there were racial overtones, etc., etc. Whether there were or not, I have no idea. But the fact was that the boy spoke to us as he had spoken in the past and to Congressman Ryan. The concern of

Library of Congress

the Congressman that previous interviews had not been sufficiently private, that people may have been concerned about being recorded or something with the result that they took precautions, such as the flash cards, made little difference.

Jim Jones came out eventually. Congressman Ryan and he talked for a while. Ryan explained that he was on an official delegation, that he had no ax to grind, that he wanted to see for himself so that he could report to his constituents. Jim Jones gave his usual spiel that these were people who had been emotionally and economically deprived in the United States and the whole purpose of this wilderness settlement was to remove them from the temptation of the large city. Although he said at one point that if he had to do it over again maybe he would not remove them quite so far. The People's Temple were the victims of malicious and untrue propaganda put out by the concerned relatives. Ryan pressed for the admittance of the press and the concerned relatives and with the support of the two lawyers Jim Jones reluctantly agreed that everyone could come in with the exception of the fellow from the National Enquirer.

There was a story behind the National Enquirer thing, which I won't bother you with now but it was typically unsavory. An article had been written and then it had been suppressed and there may have been money changing hands for the suppression of the article. Anyway he was the one fellow that Jones was adamant about not coming in.

Q: The meeting between Ryan and Jones was not heated or...?

DWYER: No, no. Both men were highly sophisticated dealing with public figures. Jones, himself, had been county commissioner for housing in Los Angeles and he had in the days of the People's Temple heyday in Los Angeles been apparently a player of at least minor importance, perhaps more than that, in the local political scene, if only because he could produce at any time several hundred people for rallies, demonstrations and speeches and the People's Temple had been a contributor to worthy causes, etc. So there was no great problem there.

Library of Congress

The interviews went on with Congressman Ryan and Jackie Spears. The press arrived pretty close to dusk. I had told the pilot of the airplane to make sure he was back by dusk, but I don't remember now whether he just stayed or what have you, but my last instructions were to be here in the morning if you can't stay here overnight.

It was obvious that we were not going to get out that night. I had anticipated this and had put a change of clothes in my briefcase along with appropriate toilet articles so I was reasonably prepared. With the arrival of the press they fanned out through the group. Walked around and talked to people. Marcy Jones got up and announced on the loudspeaker to the group as a whole that they were free to talk to the press as they wished but one did not have to do so if one did not wish to do so. She was concerned that the television lights might bother some of the older and younger people. The crew agreed that if anyone looked uncomfortable with the lights on them they would turn them off.

We all had dinner in the pavilion with the group. After dinner there was a show put on for our benefit. It was part of the show that was to be presented in Georgetown towards Christmas. At the conclusion of the show which was singing a monologue comedy thing by an older woman with an enthusiastic audience, Marcy Jones got up and asked the Congressman if he would care to say a few words about why he was here. Ryan got up and said to the group what he had previously told Jones and the lawyers that he was there on an official congressional visit; that he had no ax to grind; that he wanted to report on the facts so that there would be no doubt as to the true situation of these people in San Francisco. He added that he had been talking to people individually and he had found a number of people who thought this place was the greatest place on earth. There was certainly a great deal of enthusiasm for the community amongst some of the People's Temple members he had talked with. He got an ovation that lasted a couple of minutes. He concluded by saying that his only real regret was that these people were not back in San Francisco to vote for him. And someone called out, perhaps it was Jim Jones, "Don't worry we can vote by proxy."

Library of Congress

With that the Congressman continued his interviews along with Jackie Spears. All the relatives had been talking with their own relatives and pictures were being taken. Then there was a suggestion that the plane that was to come up in the morning would bring more relatives on it. I was concerned, very much, about this. I counseled that this not be done because we were an official delegation on official business. We were not in the tourist business. There was nothing to prevent concerned relatives, if they so wished, from chartering their own aircraft and coming up. But I could see all kinds of problems if the congressman were to somehow be held responsible for an aircraft accident or something—or the State Department. I felt personally and strongly that we had enough on our plate without adding another dozen relatives.

The press very much wanted to stay in Jonestown overnight. The Jonestown people said they simply didn't have room for all this large group. They would put up myself, the guy from the Ministry of Information, the congressman and his aide, but the others would have to go back to Port Kaituma and find whatever accommodations they could.

The NBC TV crew had arranged for a lengthy interview with Jones the next day and said to Congressman Ryan and myself that it would be a hard hitting interview. We arranged that that would be the last thing on our schedule. We would depart immediately after, presuming we had airplanes.

The People's Temple had shortwave radio communication with Georgetown. They were keeping their contacts in Georgetown well informed as to what was going on. I used the shortwave radio to talk with an Embassy consular officer who was at the People's Temple headquarters in Georgetown.

Towards the end of the evening when the press were about to go back and the interviews were continuing, a young man approached one of the NBC TV people and passed him a note which said he wanted to leave but was afraid to be seen talking to him. At about the same time, and I am still not sure of the sequence of events, this young man approached

Library of Congress

me and said he wanted to leave, and he wanted to leave right away that night. There was a girl that wanted to leave with him. I told him there was nothing I could do for him that night as I was not leaving myself. But to stay close to me and I would see that he left with me when I left in the morning. And the girl with him. The guy from NBC and myself and Ryan then talked about it and what was interesting to me, at least, was that of all the people Congressman Ryan had thus far spoken to and his aide, Jackie Spears, none of them had expressed a desire to leave. Nor did any of the relatives of the people who had come from California. This young man was someone we had never heard of before—nor was the young woman. We talked about what to do about it and decided that we would not tell the People's Temple hierarchy anything about this until it was close to the time to leave.

In the meantime, I had been on the radio and I realized that we had at least two more people going back than coming. Congressman Ryan and I had told the press and indeed the concerned relatives, but principally the press, that while they were welcomed to come up there on a “space available” basis there was no guarantee that they would get a ride home. Obviously I was concerned about everybody leaving who had to and also concerned that somebody else might want to leave. So I was in the uncomfortable position of broadcasting on the open air with the People's Temple standing around me. I told Embassy Georgetown to try to find another plane.

Anyway I hoped I got the word across that we needed another airplane which was puzzling to Georgetown, I am sure, or at least to the People's Temple people in Georgetown.

I had been talking with all kinds of People's Temple members in the course of the evening and nothing very noteworthy do I recall. We talked about how the farm was coming along, how the piggery was doing, and the problem that they had with what is known in Guyana as tigers bothering their young cattle (tigers are the pumas). In any event we called it a night around 11:00 or so, which certainly was late for the People's Temple, I am sure that they normally went to bed a little earlier on a dawn to dusk kind of community.

Library of Congress

Congressman Ryan and his aide were given quarters in the guest cottages. The fellow from the Ministry of Information and I were housed in a little cabin. I learned later it was Marcy Jones' own cabin. So we went to bed. The poor fellow from the Ministry of Information was very unhappy about being there. He didn't like the bush, it was his first time, etc. It was an uneventful night. We listened to the BBC news and then the Voice of America and then went to sleep.

In the morning there was a knock on the door. Someone brought us breakfast of pancakes, syrup and bacon which was amusing because my colleague, who was a black guy, not an East Indian, had never encountered pancakes before. We had a big discussion on how they should be eaten. The fact that you put syrup on them and eat them with a knife and fork was wrong. He knew Indian bread when he saw it and you roll it up and eat it.

We walked back down to the pavilion where Congressman Ryan and his aide were having breakfast with the members of the community. Jackie Spears was concerned that people were not being well fed, or something. Whether or not that was true they certainly were on a lean diet, I am sure, a lot of the time and a monotonous one, but they were smart enough to make sure that everybody ate well while we were there.

The interviews continued—I should have gone back and reviewed stuff because my sequence of events is foggy in my own mind—and the film crew was taking pictures all over.

Q: They came back from...

DWYER: Oh yes, the reporters came back. They came back with stories that they had picked up from, I believe, the part time militia man—he had a khaki shirt and a pair of shorts and a shotgun and he was law and order as far as Port Kaituma was concerned. The reporters said that he had told them that there had been automatic

Library of Congress

weapons smuggled into Jonestown and certainly some members of the press were uneasy about their security and some of the stories they had been told.

The interview with Jones was scheduled towards the end. In the course of the morning an elderly lady announced—I don't know who she told, whether it was me or Jackie Spears or Congressman Ryan—that she wanted to go home and that a grandchild wanted to go with her along with the grandchild's boyfriend. So now we had these three plus the two that had spoken to me and the NBC people last night. And then there were a number of others of this same large family group. I should say that ties among the people at Jonestown were terribly confusing to me and I imagine to most other people. Marriages had been made and dissolved. There were relationships that came and went. And who was related to whom was terribly difficult to figure out. But in essence the family of the grandmother that wanted to come home then had two or three children who were the children of the elderly lady's son or daughter. Anyway the Parks family. What I found interesting was that these were people who had been with Jim Jones for years, and indeed, some of them had come from Indiana with him out to California.

By this time we had half a dozen or so, I guess. The two from the evening before, the Parks family—the Parks family couldn't make up their mind as to whether they wanted to go or not—the son who was the elderly woman's grandson was a medical therapist, the articulate spokesman for the family, but his mother seemed reluctant to leave. His father said well, I don't want to stay here for the rest of my life but I don't want to leave like this. In any event, this agonizing discussion with the family went on for some time. Finally they all decided to go. They were concerned about getting their personal effects. Jackie Spears went with a couple of them back to their dormitories where they lived to gather their personal effects.

I guess by this time we must have collected a few others, but I would say that we had a total of about 11 or 12, I would guess. It became time to tell Jim Jones about this. He was visibly upset by it. He wanted to talk with the relatives. Jackie Spears was reluctant

Library of Congress

to let them do so. I said, I didn't see how we could stop him from doing so if he wishes. They talked to him and they remained firm in their decision to leave. There were hugs and kisses all the way around and Jones instructed someone to go get money to pay their way back and somebody came up with a whole bunch of Guyanese currency and threshed it into my hand—I wish I had kept it, but I didn't. I said to give it to the lawyers or to the people. We are leaving. I never did find out what happened to that particular stack of money.

In any event, I was back on the radio saying that we had to have this extra plane, etc. All the time trying to avoid specific reason for the need knowing the People's Temple people would be listening.

The NBC television crew had their interview with Jim Jones. It was confrontational to some extent. Jones certainly did not appear as healthy as he had appeared to me the previous spring. He had what it seemed like full control of his faculties. He trotted out the little boy about who the custody suit had been about, maintaining that anyone could see that this child, who was 4 or 5, was a replica of Jim Jones, and to some extent the child did look like Jim Jones—whether or not he was Jim Jones child, I suppose we will never know. But in any event at the conclusion of the television interview we were sitting around—I should say that there had been a meeting with the lawyers, with Congressional Ryan and Jim Jones and some of his lieutenants. The thrust of the statements of Congressman Ryan and indeed of the lawyers, was that 11 people out of a thousand want to go home. This was not a catastrophe. Jones was obviously upset, he considered that this was the unraveling of everything for him. Although that was not as apparent as it would later become.

The big dump truck was pulled up and the concerned relatives who were leaving began to load their things on it. The mass of People's Temple members stood around quietly and watched. There were some exchanges. Then a man came up with, I think two children, and said that he wanted to come too and take the children. A woman followed him

Library of Congress

screaming saying, "You can't take my children. My children and I stay here." We had the most difficult problem of a consular officer's life of a custody question right there.

By this time I knew we had a small single engine aircraft coming up that would carry 4 people. We were going over our space. Most of the press would have to stay off. The lawyers, I had no compunction about leaving, mainly because they were contained by the People's Temple. Even so, I wanted to get as many people out of there as possible.

With this couple coming we told them that whether the man was coming with the children or without the children was not something that we could decide. This was a legal question that we had no authority to determine. But it looked like, although we didn't have any more people wanting to go, with the exception of a young man who came very late who said he wanted to go, it looked conceivably that we might have some more if we talked to people.

Congressman Ryan and I talked about it. We decided that we would stay—in fact he decided he would stay and if he stayed, I stayed—over night again. The people who were leaving would go. I said I would take all those who were leaving to the airport and then return with the truck. We had everybody pretty much loaded up on the truck. I had given Marcy Jones my briefcase to hold for me—the only thing of value in it was a fairly expensive short wave radio. We were all on the truck. We were told by the driver that it appeared to be stuck in the mud. Whether it was actually stuck or a device to delay our departure I don't know. I suspect it was the latter while the People's Temple leaders were meeting to see what they decided they wanted to do about it.

Anyway, we were all on the truck when suddenly there came—the congressman was back in the pavilion—shouts and screams from the pavilion. I got off the truck and ran back to the pavilion. A couple of the large young men who were the security force for the People's Temple would not let the press or anyone else, besides my self—I guess they let one press guy go back. We arrived at the pavilion to find Congressman Ryan standing shaken with blood all over his shirt and another young man being held by members of the People's

Library of Congress

Temple. What had happened apparently was that this young man had approached Ryan from behind with a knife, grabbed him from the back and put the knife to his throat and said that he was going to kill him. A couple of the People's Temple members and one of the lawyers grabbed the guy and wrestled him to the ground. In the process the young man's hand was cut and he bled all over Ryan's shirt.

Ryan said that the young man had to be put in custody and the police have to be notified. The only real police were at Matthew's Ridge, an old mining town about 30 miles away, except for the guy in shorts with a shotgun in town. He was assured that this would be done and that he would be prosecuted under Guyanese law and that they would call the police right away—of course, they had no means of calling the police. Congressman Ryan was shaken obviously but still very much in command of himself. He and I walked aside and he asked what do we do now. I said, "Congressman I am not sure what I'm doing, but I want you out of here right now as fast as we can." He said, "Will you stay and see about the people who want to come back?" And I said, "Yes, I would." Looking back at it I shudder to think about it.

But in any event, my main concern was getting him out of there.

Jones was terribly, terribly upset. If he had been upset before when a few people were leaving, now with the attack on the congressman he was doubly upset. We all got in the truck. Congressman Ryan was up in the cab and the rest of us were in the bed of the truck. I don't remember where Jackie Spears was. We took off. Dale Parks, the young man who I mentioned before as the medical therapist and the spokesman for the Parks family who wanted to leave, approached me and some others of the newsmen and the congressman's party. He said that the young man who had gotten on the truck—a small man with a long raincoat—was Larry Layton. He was certain that Larry Layton was not a true defector. Larry Layton was one of the most dedicated members of Jones' hierarchy and he was sure that Layton was a plant.

Library of Congress

We drove to the gate of the People's Temple—there was a dirt road that may be about a mile and a half from the center part of the community to the edge of the property where it joined the state road. [I should have added that there was an incident the day before of a tractor filled with logs that was supposedly broken down across the path of the road coming into People's Temple which delayed our entry there. I don't know whether it was a real accident or not, but it had been another unsettling thing.] As we were going out Dale Parks' father, the guy who said he didn't want to spend the rest of his life there but didn't want to leave under those circumstances, was adamant that he wanted to go back to the piggery of which he was in charge to collect his personal belongings. I said, “No way.” Later I learned that he wanted to go back for a revolver that they kept there to kill the hogs with and perhaps some money, I don't know.

At the gate we stopped and a couple of the security guards got into the back of the truck—real mean looking bastards—and carefully looked at everybody. Someone from the people who were leaving with us said that one guy was looking for his wife who he thought was leaving. I didn't know then and didn't learn for some time that in addition—I don't think any of us knew, Ryan, or Spears, the press or myself—in the course of the night apparently a lot of people had left the People's Temple. They had just walked away and were headed for Port Kaituma or Matthew's Ridge. I don't recall if I ever saw a figure of how many actually did, but there were a sizeable number. This obviously was a factor...

Q: So we are not just talking about a normal small number of people getting tired of where they were, but we are talking about the whole thing beginning to unravel.

DWYER: Well, our concern at the Embassy had always been that the thing was going to unravel as a number of others had before it and that we were going to have a thousand people who wanted to go home. As a matter of fact, People's Temple had insinuated one of their more attractive young girls as a mistress to the Guyanese Ambassador to the United States and he was very free with his conversations with her. After this thing was all over and after some of the documents were being shifted, I found memoranda

Library of Congress

of conversation between the Guyanese Ambassador and myself, as Charg# d'Affaires, concerning the People's Temple that had been written by this guy's mistress and sent up to Jones. Interestingly enough, they were accurate. Jones had a system where not one person wrote a report, but three people wrote a report on the same thing so that he had three different versions of it and none of these reports were to be shown to the other two people.

We proceeded from the gate of the People's Temple through the little village of Port Kaituma to the airstrip. No airplanes. While we all stood around on the tarmac, I told Congressman Ryan that I had been warned about Larry Layton and that we wanted to be sure that we body searched every member of the group that was leaving with us for weapons or things like that. He agreed fully. Although in Larry Layton's case they missed it.

I then asked the driver of the big truck to drive me back the half mile to Port Kaituma. I wanted to get to a radio. They had a radio telephone there but as often is the case it was not working. I informed the government representative there, a young man who was a career government officer who had been left to cool his heels up in the boonies for ages. At first I couldn't find him, it was a Saturday afternoon, but being experienced in the ways of the foreign service in small countries, I found him in the grog shop, where everybody was having a few rums. He quite rightly was concerned about it. He told me the telephone was out, but he rounded up his man with the shotgun. As we were walking out of the grog shop the first airplane came over. Much to my surprise the truck that had driven me to town headed back to the airport leaving me there. The government representative found a guy in the grog shop who was in from the bush with his young son. He was pretty much 3 sheets to the wind by this time, but he had a truck. We borrowed the truck, got the man with the shotgun, myself and some other guy who I never did figure out who he was, and all drove back to the airport.

Library of Congress

There were two airplanes on the ground—the Islander, the larger aircraft, was about a quarter of the way down the tarmac, the little airplane was behind it. The loading of the aircraft was going on. People were being searched as they got on the aircraft. I talked with Ryan telling him that I would be going back to People's Temple as agreed but that I wanted him out of there. I shook hands with him and said goodbye—all of this is on television, by the way—and then walk over to the cockpit of the airplane and spoke to the pilot, whom I knew, and said, “If you are not back here in the morning I am going to come on to you. I don't care if I have to buy Guyana Airways or the Embassy does, we will do so.” He said, “Don't worry about it, if they won't give me authority to do it, I will come back on my own.”

So I turned away from the cockpit. Ryan was standing out by the wing tip. The airplane was facing south and the engines were running. Ryan started to walk towards the aircraft when a farm tractor pulled on to the field towing a farm cart with wooden sides going up two or three feet. I might also add, incidentally, although as it turned out they had little to do with the story, there was also a military aircraft, a small airplane, on the field that had broken its nose wheel. There was a lieutenant and two or three military men there guarding the aircraft, possibly to repair it, I don't know. They had their tents there and were armed.

The tractor pulled on to the field and came down along the side of the tarmac. I turned around to look and as we watched, nine or ten people stood up from the truck and they had various guns.

Q: This was from the cart that was being towed.

DWYER: Yes, from the cart that was being towed by the tractor. They had various guns—shotguns, 22s, 306 and various other things. But no automatic weapons. And they began firing. The Congressman was obviously a target. He and I ran around the front nose of the aircraft. The tractor which had the cart from which people were firing at us was between

Library of Congress

the airplane and the bush on the one side of the airstrip so those people who were closer to the bush could run off into the bush, while those of us at the airplane and in front of it didn't have much of a place to go. We decided to independently run across the tarmac to the protection of some houses and trees on the other side. About at that stage the NBC television tape ends with the murder of the cameraman. It was all filmed from the time the firing began. He was obviously a target. I got to the other side of the airplane and decided that there was just no way that I could possibly make it across another 75 yards of open territory and decided that I would play dead. As I was about to artistically fall to the ground, and indeed I must have almost been on the ground, somebody shot me. [In Indiana where I am from you only shoot birds on the fly you don't shoot them on the ground.] Somebody got me with a 22 long. As I later learned I wasn't badly hurt. It had entered my left thigh and lodged up near the spine—it is still there, it is more dangerous to take it out than leave it alone.

Anyway, I was on the ground there. Staccato firing continued for what seemed like a long time, but probably couldn't have been more than a couple of minutes. I had thought that the reason I didn't want to run across the tarmac or try to go any further was because I thought we were in a cross-fire between the big truck that was parked on the other side of the tarmac from the tractor. I had thought that we were being fired on from that truck. Later only one other person thought we had been fired on from that truck, so I don't know whether we were or not. Anyway, I was convinced we were and that I would never make it passed that truck.

I lay on the ground and the firing stopped. I was trying to pretend that I was dead. I couldn't decide whether I would be more convincing playing dead with my eyes open or closed. Finally I decided that I at least would like to see those bastards. I heard feet on the loose stones of the dirt on the tarmac and a shotgun went off. More steps and the shotgun went off again. Ryan had obviously been hit more than once. I had seen those five or six feet from me curled around the wheel of the airplane landing gear apparently for protection. The shotgun continued for five shots including right next to me—Ryan. I was

Library of Congress

waiting for the next shot which never came. To this day I do not know why. I suspect that it was a five shot shotgun and the last one was used on Ryan.

The steps went away and I lay on the ground until finally I heard the vehicles drive away. There was no conversation, no shouts that I recall.

Q: The plane was still there?

DWYER: The plane was still there and the engines were running—or were they running? No, I guess they weren't.

After a few moments I looked around carefully and there wasn't anybody there. The Washington Post reporter, who was lying not far from me and I knew had done the same thing as I had, played doggo, Charles Kraus, got up. I walked around to the congressman. He had been shot, obviously, more than once. Probably with a rifle, but the better part of his face had been blown away with the shotgun. The cameraman was dead. The photographer from the Hearst newspapers was dead. Everyone had fled the airplane into the bush and when I went into the airplane Mrs. Parks, Dale Parks' mother was sitting in a seat near the door with most of her head blown away by a shotgun blast at short range. Her face was still there but there was nothing behind it. It was incredible.

We had wounded all over the place. Jackie Spears had been badly hurt. A couple of the NBC cameramen had been badly hurt. My immediate concern was that these people could come back and finish the job. Why they didn't finish the job I don't know. I guess the fact was that they were not very good at anything. We carried the wounded over to the tall grass and hit them as much as we could. It wasn't too good as you could see the tracks going into the grass. When that was done I went over to talk to the pilot. Again I talked to him at the cockpit of the airplane because he needed magnetos to try to get his radio running. We were talking over the roar of the engines and I couldn't hear very well, so I decided to board the airplane. I mentioned earlier that I had been around airplanes since I was 3 years old or younger. I walked into the propeller of this one! It sliced off the material

Library of Congress

of my left sleeve and all I could think of was here people have been shooting at me, I lie on the ground playing dead, and then I walk into a propeller. But, God was with me that day, and I only lost a piece of my shirt. I backed away, got on the airplane and asked the pilot if he could fly it. He had a crew of three—a pilot, copilot and steward. He said that the port engine of the aircraft had been hit several times and he had lost throttle control on it, but that he was willing to take off with me if I wanted to give it a chance, but he felt there was no way that he could get off with a full load with only one engine. That wasn't the idea. The idea was to get the wounded out and as many others out as we could.

I had in the interval and when we still thought we could use the plane, rounded up an Amerindian, which is what the Indian of Guyana is called. We carried Mrs. Parks' body out of the aircraft and laid it on the tarmac thinking that maybe we could use the airplane.

We then went around and I tried to make a list of who was wounded and who was dead. My problem was that I didn't know these people and I had to depend on their relatives and the press to determine who they were. I then put the list in my pocket. This was to be the source of some concern later to the conspiratorial theorists and what have you who accused the Department of covering up who had been killed, and who had been wounded. We were like hell! The list I gave to the pilot of the aircraft. Wait a minute, I know what I did. I took the pilot's manifest and used that and then made a list of my own.

About that time, Dale Parks, one of the People's Temple figures who was leaving, came up to me with Charles Kraus, holding Larry Layton. And there were a couple of local people with them. I might add that the government representatives and everybody else had just disappeared into the bush.

Q: How about the soldiers?

DWYER: I will get to that in a minute. I was a little angry with the soldiers.

Library of Congress

Anyway they came up with Larry Layton and said that he had gotten on the small airplane and had shot and tried to kill a woman, a People's Temple person who was leaving, and had tried to shoot the other two people who were leaving but the gun had misfired after a couple of shots. Dale Parks had wrestled the gun away from him. Layton wasn't saying anything. My Amerindian friend who had helped me with the body of Mrs. Parks said, "Boss, you want we take this boy for a walk in the woods?" There were times through the trial of Larry Layton later that I wished I had let Larry Layton go for a walk in the woods with the Indians. But their intent was clear and I found somebody else who took him back to Port Kaituma and locked him up in an office in the government house there.

We started to walk back to the little airplane which had its engine running. The small aircraft had not been harmed. To Kraus and my surprise it started to take off. It took off with the pilot of the small aircraft on it, the pilot of the airliner, the copilot and the steward we could see. The pilot of the airliner was pointing behind him towards the road that led to the People's Temple and the plane disappeared into the sky. Charles Kraus and I thought that he was warning us that somebody was coming or that they were coming back so we all ran into the bush and shouted for everyone to hide. We stayed there for about 15 minutes and came out and it suddenly dawned on me and on Mr. Kraus that the s.o.b. was just leaving. The aircraft crew of the large airplane and the pilot of the small airplane had taken off with one wounded girl leaving the rest on the ground. They were absolutely no help whatsoever.

The pilot subsequently—I refused to talk to him for quite a while I just didn't want to see the guy again. He was persistent and came in to explain that he wanted to get back and felt he was the only one who could fly and assure that the small airplane would get back because the pilot of the small airplane was in no condition to fly because he was so frightened. He wanted to get back, get help and come back in. But the Guyanese authorities would not allow him to fly back at night. Whatever the reason was, I was not happy.

Library of Congress

I then went up to the lieutenant, who had a side arm and whose men had a couple of automatic weapons between them and said, "What the hell were you doing? Where were you?" I am not a man easily aroused but I was as angry as I have ever been in my life, I think. He said, "Well, boss, we didn't know which group of Americans was shooting the other group of Americans and decided it wasn't any of our business." I informed him, which was true, that I had had dinner the night before with his regimental commander and his immediate superior officers and I would personally guarantee him retirement as a corporal if he were lucky, unless he got to it and moved his stuff out of the tent that he was in and moved the wounded in there and put them on the soldiers' cots. We gathered up the rest of the walking wounded and the others and went to a little tavern there where the operators lived above. They made available a couple of rooms and everybody sat there. I gave the woman who ran the tavern some money.

I assembled the group and gave them a little pep talk the best I could. I said they could have a drink if they want but...

Q: How were the people such as the lawyers and...

DWYER: The lawyers were not there. They were back at the Temple.

Q: How about the news crew?

DWYER: In absolute shock. Everyone there had cameras but not one of them pulled them out. The cameraman was killed, his audio guy had half of his arm shot away. The anchorman for the NBC production that had interviewed Jones, etc. had obviously been a target. He had been killed. Bob Flick the producer of the show was just absolutely stunned. He had worked with this crew through Vietnam and various war zones among other places, and was just absolutely crushed that here in this rinky-dink country's backwoods he had lost a major part of his crew. He sat with the wounded all night and refused to leave. He gave them water, took care of them, held their hands. Took down what we

Library of Congress

thought were their last words, etc. The rest of the news crew took 45 minutes and a number of them were back to normal. They began writing their notes and comparing stories.

The People's Temple group were remarkable and so were the relatives. Nobody panicked, nobody broke down into hysterics. I don't know whether it was the idea of having lived with People's Temple and being used to doing what somebody said without complaint or whether it was a hard life that they stood up for themselves, but it was a truly remarkable group—even the children. As a matter of fact, two or three of the younger children, the Parks children, as they were being fired upon and just after their mother had been killed, ran out and shut the door of the airplane. Otherwise the whole crew in the interior of the airplane would have been sitting ducks for these guys. The kids disappeared into the bush and weren't seen for a couple of days. A remarkable group.

Jackie Spears was badly wounded. I was concerned whether she was going to live throughout the night. She asked me to look after Ryan's briefcase which had tapes in it of all these things. This was to become a source of minor contention later.

We sat there and waited and hoped for relief from Georgetown. We posted someone to keep a watch on the road coming from People's Temple. We even had a password for those local Guyanese we didn't know. So we had the most seriously wounded I was afraid to move on the tarmac in the tent; the dead were still lying on the ground. Night came and nobody else did. We were told by People's Temple representatives, I mean the defectors from the People's Temple, that they were sure that the White Night would be for real back at Jonestown. The White Night, I learned had been a rehearsal for death that Jones would have people go through a number of times in the middle of the night. He would get everybody out of bed by the loudspeakers and they would come in and he would harangue them and pass them cool aid or some such drink and tell them that it was poison. They would drink it and...

Library of Congress

Q: Was this the first time you had heard about this?

DWYER: Certainly in any detail. I don't know whether the name was familiar or not. There had been a girl who had left People's Temple with the Embassy's help, come back and given a press conference in which she described it in June or July. So I certainly had heard about it. I was in a very impressionable state you could say and most unhappy. The little bar was all out of good Guyanese beer amongst other things and by this time I was having a little problem navigating. If I sat down for any length of time I had a difficult time getting up again.

The long and short of it was that we waited, waited and waited. Early in the morning and before dawn, I would say around 3:00, the government representative from the village came down to say that he had been finally in radio contact with Georgetown. That a company of troops were being flown into Matthew's Ridge and would take the little freight train that used to haul the ore down to Kaituma. It was commanded by a captain or major that I knew. I went back with him and called the Embassy. By this time, of course, they knew what had happened because the pilots had gotten back and been debriefed by the Prime Minister with the American Ambassador present. But the details were still not known. I spoke to our ambassador and filled him in on what had happened and urged him to get relief up there as quickly as possible. The shooting had occurred about 4 or 5:00 in the afternoon and as I say we had nothing but the first aid kit on the airplane to try and bandage these people with. We found a nurse from a dispensary. She brought down all the morphine tablets she had—there weren't many. We were giving some people rum but I was concerned. Obviously they were going to need a lot of medical attention and I was afraid to give them too much morphine or too much rum, even though they were in severe pain. Amazing though how little complaint there was, it was just incredible.

The commander of the troops came in 4 or 5:00 in the morning. I expressed my concern that these people might come back again. I asked where his company was. He said he had driven—they found one landrover at Matthew's Ridge with enough gas to get down

Library of Congress

to Port Kaituma. The rest of them were taking the train down and would be dismounting several miles away from Port Kaituma and walk in because he was afraid of sabotage of the train. I learned later that he had been with forces in Angola and the Angolans evidently had a habit of blowing up the train when reinforcements came in. The full company arrived an hour or two later and we posted them around the perimeter of the tarmac and the tavern where the people were assembled, and for the first time I felt reasonably safe.

All this time we did not know what had gone on at Jonestown, except for one or two people who had gotten away and came back with stories saying that they were all dead—killing themselves. But this came with a story that one of the people in our group told me, that they had made a tank at Jonestown which was hidden in the woods—all kinds of rumors.

We didn't get an airplane in there until 10:00 in the morning. It had been light for four hours by this time. When it came it was an army aircraft. It had no facilities for taking care of the wounded—no doctors, no bandages, nothing. I was increasingly mad. The pilot was adamant that he was not supposed to go back. And I said, "You are going back." We took the seats out and put the worst of the wounded in it and he went back. Part of the problem was fuel. There was no fuel at Port Kaituma and you had to bring it or go up to Matthew's Ridge where they were installing fuel supplies. So that was where the airplanes were.

A little while later an Embassy officer arrived—he wasn't on the first plane—a guy who was in our political section and whose job was the military and couldn't have been a better man for the job. He knew all the military in the army, himself, and he was their best contact. By this time we had had a series of airplanes in and I had gotten everybody out and there was one last space on the last airplane for me. And out from the woods comes one of our defectors who had been hiding in the woods for nearly 24 hours. I looked at this guy and he looked at me. I said, "Oh, what the hell, get on the airplane, go." So he went.

So the Embassy guy and I were there and I was looking at a second night. In the meantime the police had come up and I had gone around with one of the inspectors and

Library of Congress

surveyed the bodies and taken the valuables from them the best I could. We lost some things. The newsman's widow from California was terribly upset with me because I had not saved a gold necklace from her husband's neck that it had somehow disappeared by the time the body got back to California. It had been a wedding gift or something. It was terribly difficult. I couldn't explain to her that he had received the full brunt of the shotgun and that I was having trouble enough doing what I was doing without dismembering her husband's corpse to get a gold necklace.

Then the guy from the Embassy and myself looked around for somewhere—the bodies were still on the ground. The police had come up and had done whatever they were supposed to do, although it was frankly a bit of a joke in Guyana. And just about as we were going to retire and were looking for a place to sleep that night, the smaller military airplane came in. It had body bags on it. The soldiers put the bodies in the body bags and we put them in the back of the airplane and went back to Georgetown.

By this time it was almost dusk again. We flew into a small airport. We had gotten a funeral director to take the bodies and he met us at the airport. We had had excellent response from Washington. An ambulance plane had been in and taken out all the wounded and taken off again.

Q: How about your wound?

DWYER: Well, here I was. As it happened we lived next door to a hospital so I went home and had a cold beer, tried not to sit on any thing and took a hot shower. The Embassy nurse came over and shot me full of antibiotics and penicillin and made me promise to check into the hospital the next day. They wanted to take me over there but I wanted to sleep in my own bed that night. The Ambassador came over and debriefed me. I learned of the murders of Sharon Amos and her children at the People's Temple headquarters in Georgetown. Apparently there had been instructions that everybody down there would kill themselves. Whether Sharon Amos had to kill her own children or whether another

Library of Congress

member of the People's Temple, slightly retarded, did so, we didn't know. But things were a mess, obviously.

The next morning I walked over to the hospital—a little Catholic hospital—they had a good surgeon, Sister Mary something or other, from Baltimore. I said to her that I didn't know if I should be in there in her nice clean little hospital or rather I should go to the big dirty Georgetown General hospital where they see lots of gun shot wounds. She said not to worry, that she had done her internship in south Philadelphia and new all about such wounds. So she cut me open, cleaned me out and decided to leave the bullet in me because it would be too much of a task to get it out, at least in Georgetown. I was in the hospital for four days or so until I began to get terribly antsy and got up one afternoon and went down to the office. The hospital was very upset, but I was more concerned about what was going on—what we were doing with the rest of the group than I was...

[Tape 6, Side 1]

Q: October 12, 1990. This is a continuation of an interview with Richard Dwyer. Dick when we left off the last time you had said you just couldn't stand staying in the hospital any more. You got out of bed, despite the objections of the nurses, and headed for the Embassy.

DWYER: Well, that is right. We had come back from Port Kaituma and Jonestown late Sunday afternoon. That flight back with the bodies and the congressman and three of the people who had been killed was the most difficult thing. It had been raining up there in Port Kaituma and I hadn't been dry for two days or so and anyway we got back. The Ambassador came over and I had a conversation with him and then the Embassy nurse came over and shot me full of tetanus shots and what have you. The next morning, Monday, I went into the office, again over everybody's objection, but I wanted to read the traffic that had been coming in and going out and see what was going on. I also had some stuff that I had to do. So I went into the office and dictated a long telegram on what

Library of Congress

had happened up at Jonestown from the time we started out until the time we got back. Then I took care of some personal stuff that I had been procrastinating about doing before and did it all in about 20 minutes. I should say that the Embassy on Monday morning was obviously a beehive of activity. The Ambassador had been offered somebody to replace me for a while until I was back in working order. Ironically the first choice happened to be the man with whom I had served as DCM in Africa, one of the ambassador's there, someone who I was convinced had never made a decision in his life. I told John Burke if you bring this guy in I go home right now. So we agreed on someone else. The Embassy by this time were beginning to get—the most difficult decision that the Ambassador had to make at that time was what to do with the bodies up at Jonestown. The Guyanese government had come to him with the request that the bodies be taken back to the United States. John Burke quite correctly went back to Washington asking for instructions on how to do it.

Q: There was no way they could all be buried there.

DWYER: They could have been buried there, but there were all sorts of problems. By this time on Monday morning—on Sunday evening just as I was leaving the military went in to Jonestown and discovered, of course, that the worst had come to pass and there were 900 odd bodies lying on the ground in the tropical heat already beginning to decompose. The options were fairly limited. One of the major things to do was try to identify the bodies and I believe they had brought back to Jonestown a couple of the People's Temple members who went around and tried to identify the bodies, as many as they knew. They tagged them all. Of course they tagged them all with washable ink someone told me later and when the first rain came along it was all gone.

The Guyanese government, of course, was completely overwhelmed. There were no forensic facilities to speak of at all, etc. The only option seemed to be to just bury them up there, but this had all kinds of problems. We knew that relatives and other people would certainly want to have the bodies of their relatives back, although as it turned out there

Library of Congress

were not that many. There were a lot of people up there without relatives or with relatives who didn't want the bodies back. In any event, Burke strongly urged the Department to do this and we did so. So the Air Force came in with crews to take the bodies back. These crews were coming in on Monday morning. A typical Air Force operation—you know just an enormous mound of equipment and airplanes and everything else. The Embassy at the time had—I forget how many now, but I think something like 70 or 80 survivors—that had to be taken care of. I had an outside telephone on my desk in my office and this had been hooked up with the Operations Center with a speaker phone and was just left open for 24 hours a day. We had, with the Department's help, borrowed several consular officers from surrounding posts to help with the problems. I said earlier that we had never been fully staffed in the consular section, since I had been there.

Anyway, I went in the office and found a very nice telegram from the Secretary there and another from Barbara Watson who was head of Consular Affairs at the time, plus all kinds of people I had never seen before. I took care of what business I could and then that afternoon I went over and checked myself into the hospital.

There was a nun there—this was the Sisters of Mercy hospital which was conveniently only a block from our house. An American nun who was a surgeon quite correctly operated on me and cleaned me up. She left the bullet in because they had no facilities for getting it out. Besides it seemed better to leave it in than try to take it out as it was lodged near the spine. So I sat in the hospital terribly frustrated knowing that things were going on in the office and I wanted to be in on what was going on.

We were submerged by the press, there must have been a couple of hundred—2 or 3 hundred I would guess—from all over the world. Everyone from Agence France Presse to somebody from Spain and all the American news service and everything else. They besieged my poor wife and family in trying to get in and talk with me. I said that I was simply not going to talk with anybody. Fortunately we had a very good man working for me, my driver. My wife had him sitting at the telephone trying to deflect some of these

Library of Congress

calls in the days before telephone answering things—which still may not be available in Guyana. I remember my wife telling me that one guy called up and said he was calling on behalf of the Minister of Information, who was a woman, Mrs. Field Wrigley, and this obviously American said, “Well Mrs. Wrigley Field told me to call”. Only an American would have reversed that—and from Chicago.

So, by the time I was—I was operated on and cleaned up on Tuesday morning. My Guyanese friends were just wonderful. I had a steady stream of friends, plus the FBI. The FBI wanted that bullet in the worse possible way. They kind of reminded me of a pointer, a hunting dog, in the bush watching the bird and sort of quivering. He knew the bird was there and couldn't get at it.

By Saturday I felt well enough, despite what my nuns were saying, and I asked for something to sign and went back to the office and back to work and fortunately I was all right. The wound was relatively clean and there was just a minor infection which meant I had to be cleaned out occasionally, but there was no great problem with that except that it was terribly uncomfortable to sit down for a great length of time.

The major immediate problems at the Embassy were threefold. The first was the removal of the bodies. The second was the preservation, insofar as possible, of the site at People's Temple because we knew that the records and what have you of the People's Temple would be terribly important. And there came the question of course—there was all kinds of personal property up there and as it turned out all kinds of cash and everything else. So that was a second priority. Another priority was obviously the remaining people from People's Temple up there.

For the first couple of days after the tragedy of Jonestown, particularly, there was a high state of wariness because many of the People's Temple people had told us that there had been plans that if this White Night or mass suicides or murders ever came to pass why there were hit teams that were supposed to go out and assassinate various people.

Library of Congress

And indeed in Georgetown at the People's Temple headquarters the People's Temple representative and her three or four children had been killed or had committed suicide. I am not sure that anybody will know for sure, but certainly the younger children did not slit their own throats. We were told there was a People's Temple basketball team that had included a number of the People's Temple security people that was in Georgetown to play a basketball game with a Georgetown team—so these fellows were wandering around. Right about that time, I can't exactly remember when, then or a few days later, the mayor of San Francisco, Moscone, had been assassinated and there was concern in Georgetown, and I presume in San Francisco as well, that this might have been People's Temple hit. As it turned out it was not.

Anyway we had 60 or 80 people. The Embassy had to find housing for them, transportation back to the States and all the usual problems of evacuating a sizeable group of Americans, complicated by the fact that the Guyanese police wanted to talk to many of them as to what had actually happened. This was a source of great concern because all these people wanted to do was to get out of there. They were terribly frightened. We had all kinds of problems with them. The usual types of things. I can remember shortly after I got back I got a telephone call from the manager of one of the hotels that we had some of these people in saying that this one guy was bringing in girls from the street and had gotten into a fight with a fellow People's Temple member he was sharing a room with about whether the girls could come in or not. I had to talk to this guy and tell him that we were giving him his room and board but were not paying for the girls. He could do what he wanted, but not in the hotel. And things like that which normally would have been taken care of by the consular section.

The Embassy was on 24 hour shifts and we were talking with everybody. When the Air Force people went in to Jonestown to bring the bodies back, someone had started the rumor that there were whole fields of marijuana there. Then we got the drug enforcement agency saying that they wanted to come down and go in. Everybody wanted a piece of the action. And it turned out that these were not marijuana trees at all, they were a tropical

Library of Congress

vegetable that looked a little bit like the marijuana leaf to some of these kids, apparently. So it was a busy time.

We did get somebody down in the interval to take my place while I was in the hospital. A very good man but ironically for me as I mentioned earlier as an Inspector in the Foreign Service I had done an inspection of the security division of the State Department which took care of the Secretary's personal security. And it happened to be the then Deputy Assistant Secretary for this division about whom I had written a rather critical report, that I found at my desk when I walked in. But he was a good man.

Q: But tell me, there is almost a pattern to these things. We are seeing it right now. I am talking on October 12, 1990 when tensions are very high, Iraqi has just taken over Kuwait. First you have crisis situation. Everyone chips in and really gets the job done. Then there is the period, and I am not talking about just within the Foreign Service, but looking around for a scapegoat or recriminations. Did you feel a change saying "well, the Embassy should have known about this or done this," particularly when you get congress and all involved? They are looking around and in a way you are the closest people to the spot.

DWYER: Well that was to come. It took them a little while. In many ways I was a bit insulated from a lot of this because the people we had left Jonestown with had been very complimentary about me up in Jonestown and at Port Kaituma airport. Therefore, as the only representative who had been up there, the only Embassy person up there, I was most in demand for the press—I was the guy people wanted to talk to. The FBI and everybody else. This was no problem for me. There was nothing up there that I couldn't talk about. We had a dozen representatives of the press right with me for every moment. But indeed this was to come. The most far out thing to come that developed was a series of newspaper articles out on the west coast, picked up by some of the wire services, alleging that this had all been a CIA conspiracy. That Jonestown had been used by the CIA to experiment with mind-control drugs and that I, Dwyer, was their man on the scene and that after we had all been shot up at the airport had gone back to Jonestown

Library of Congress

somehow and cleaned up everything and hidden all the records and things that this. In part this came from the admin assistant of Congressman Ryan, who just judging by the news reports had just gone off the deep end but good. In part it was due to some young guy over in CIA, I don't know who it was, who had told this guy and maybe somebody else that he had direct reports from their man on the scene, so he could give them the hot poop. There wasn't anybody there, I was it. It was frustrating as hell for any Foreign Service Officer as you know we have standard procedures for questions such as that. Any Foreign Service Officer who is asked such a question is to say that he can neither confirm or deny any such rumor. In someway I wish I had just told the State Department to go to hell and said, "No, I am not CIA, never was and do not intend to be."

Yet we were sensitive there because there had been a man in Georgetown who had been with the Agency, had been station chief. He had been identified as such in a book by a man called James Agee and he had been assassinated, possibly because of this identification in the book, in Greece just a year or two before.

Q: That was in 1974, I think, or '75.

DWYER: Yes, about that time.

Anyway these rumors were the most far out ones. These things resurface from time to time. A couple of years later while I was in Martinique, I got a call from Jack Anderson's column, I forget which one, one of these guys who wanted to hear what I had to say about this. I said, "Well, first of all it was all nonsense, because if you would call Bob Flick from NBC news, with whom I had spent most of my first night up there and anyone of the other news people, you would find that my time was completely taken and accounted for and there was no way that I could have hobbled back to Jonestown." And Jack Anderson, of course, merely reprinted the allegations saying that Dwyer denies it. I am still mad about it.

With all the newsmen down there one of the big problems, of course, was that they had nothing to report. They interviewed all the survivors a dozen times each and then they

Library of Congress

interviewed themselves. That was about all that they could do. Eventually some of them were flown up to Jonestown or managed to tag along with some of the military aircraft going up there. Mark Lane the lawyer, with whom the government of Guyana wanted to talk very badly had left the country quietly by some private plane going in and out. By this time the Guyana airport looked more like National with all these planes coming in and out. Guyanese customs and immigration were just overwhelmed, of course, so Mark Lane one of the principals simply disappeared back to the United States where he began his lecture career again.

We sent a consular officer up there who nailed consular notices all over Jonestown saying that this was American property and tried to seal the premises, which, of course, didn't work very well. Then the consular officers, with help from the military, began grabbing all the records they could find, to bring them back to Georgetown. We made an agreement with the Guyanese government that would permit the FBI to take these records back to the United States and go through them on the condition that they would be returned to the Guyanese government—which indeed they were. But these, I don't know how many now, dozens and dozens of large footlockers full of things. It turned out that the People's Temple kept incredible records on everything. The kind of things we were looking for immediately were things like dental charts so that the bodies could be identified when they were brought back to Dover, Delaware at the Air Force facility there. We found all kinds of dental records which were a great help.

Eventually we made agreements with the Guyanese government to get out as many of the people, the survivors, as we could with a few exceptions, the people they wanted to talk to specifically.

Only one person eventually was charged in Guyana with a crime and that was the man who had been at the Georgetown People's Temple office—a man of somewhat below intelligence who was suspected of and eventually was convicted of helping Sharon Amos kill her children. He had been an ex-Marine, but he was functionally illiterate and to this

Library of Congress

day it was quite possible he did what he was accused of but in no way was he a leader or anything else of the group. And he served some time there.

The other person who was accused of the conspiracy and the murders was Larry Layton. Larry Layton had been on the small airplane. He had been the one I had been warned about and the congressman and the news people had been warned about—that he was probably not a true defector. He had been accused of shooting two people on the small airplane. He was held for trial. To jump ahead of myself, it was a long time, I think a year, before he was brought to trial. Eventually when he was brought to trial we could only get—the Guyanese government could only get one People's Temple member to come back and testify against him. Unfortunately this young man was a bad witness in Guyana. He was gay and he arrived in Guyana wearing a tank top and shorts and all kinds of little half moon earrings in one ear and stars in the other. Although a very nice man, a serious decent man who had a lot of courage to come back there, the Guyanese defense lawyer for Larry Layton made a lot of this man's personal sexual proclivities and I am sure it didn't help.

In addition to which, the Guyanese government did not prosecute this case as well as they might. I think they did it purposely. They just didn't want this guy in Guyana; they vastly preferred to get rid of him. So Larry Layton was acquitted. Back in the United States he admitted that he had in fact shot these people, so there was no question about it. The Guyanese government had the decency of at least putting him on a direct flight to Miami where he was arrested by the FBI. Now remember, only because of a law passed in the late '60s or early '70s was there any crime committed in another country that an American citizen could be accused of. It was not a crime in the United States for an American citizen to murder someone in Guyana. But the law had been changed so that the crime of conspiracy to murder or the actual murder of a certain class of people, which included Foreign Service Officer and members of congress, could be prosecuted in the United States.

Library of Congress

By the time we began to get the identity straightened out of the people who died at Jonestown, the FBI came to the conclusion that all of those that had attacked us at the airport were dead. I had a little list in my office and whenever we would identify one I would check him off. I was very much relieved when we found that the last one there had been checked off. Larry Layton, because he had hung around a little bit too long, because I had grabbed him along with Dale Parks and Charles Kraus and then we had locked him up, was the only one of the group that had not gone back to Jonestown and killed himself. But we knew that Layton had not fired on me or the congressman because he was in the smaller airplane. And so he was prosecuted on the charge of conspiracy to murder, and conspiracy, of course, is a difficult thing to prove, particularly when everyone else is dead.

Anyway, that is getting ahead of the story.

Q: And also you know from a practical point of view if we can stick to, because I think we are going to have to cut now, what happened to you and how this played as far as it affected you.

DWYER: In a week to ten days, I would guess, we had gotten out of the country most of the People's Temple people there. Oh, I should add to that these people in Jonestown recorded everything on audio tapes. They had all of Jim Jones' speeches or harangues to the group and incredibly enough we discovered a tape of that last 45 minutes of the People's Temple. This was obviously going to be very valuable testimony and Ambassador Burke had taken very careful pains to build up insofar as possible a history of this—a trail of possession so that it would be useable in court. We had problems with that. A young consul who was down there from Panama had leaked this to the press and, of course, we were under explicit instructions that this was to go to the Department of Justice and that we were to do absolutely nothing with it but to take care of it.

That tape affected me too because it included Jim Jones' last harangue to the People's Temple saying that they should all kill themselves, that the congressman was dead and

Library of Congress

although Jones was not responsible for it he felt responsible for everything that had happened and therefore the time had come to make the final protest which was to be mass suicide. The people had come back from the airport to say that the airplanes were to be brought down on their return to Georgetown. I am glad I didn't know that before but apparently this was Layton who was suppose to shoot everybody on his airplane and take the plane into the jungle. To this day we do not know whether there was to be somebody else to do that on the larger aircraft or not. Then Jim Jones presumed that I had come back and said, "Where is Dwyer?" "Take Dwyer and put him with the lawyers," he said. Of course I was not there, I was at the airport, but because of that it helped a lot of these rumors or allegations that I was there running the CIA mind control thing. The fact that it was leaked to the press almost immediately was no particular help.

When I got out of the hospital the speaker phone was still on my desk, by this time it had been a week that it had been open—this long distance call from Washington. I told the admin officer that he was going to get a high telephone bill from the telephone on my desk, but not to blame it on me. But I don't know what they did about it. The Guyanese government was not very good at billing telephone rates, everybody complained about it because you had no record of what it was. I think this came in as a \$30,000 telephone bill or something and the Guyanese government said that couldn't be right so cut it down when, in fact, for the first time they probably got it right.

Then I spent a lot of time talking on the telephone with the relatives. That was difficult. The NBC reporter who had been killed up there had been newly married and his bride was on the telephone and wanted to know what had happened to the gold necklace she had given him on their first wedding anniversary or something, because it was not on the body. I just didn't have the heart to describe to her the conditions there or what it looked like—it obviously had been stolen, probably by some Guyanese.

Then there was all kinds of cash floating around. Two members of the People's Temple had been arrested by the Guyanese authorities trying to get back to Georgetown with a

Library of Congress

suitcase with a couple of hundred thousand dollars worth of cash in it. I forget the exact amount, but it was a substantial amount of money. The Guyanese government had this cash and we wanted to get it back to put it into the People's Temple's coffers. By this time the People's Temple had been put into receivership. There were probably other substantial sums of cash that disappeared. Going back to Jonestown later and talking with some of the natives, they were all full of \$20 bills so a lot of this was circulating around. This particular set of cash had supposedly been given to these two guys with a revolver by Maria, one of Jones' top aides, with instructions to take it to the Soviet Embassy in Guyana.

The records were needed too. We spent a lot of time trying to trace bank accounts where the money had gone to. Eventually the People's Temple receiver had about ten million bucks, I think. How much of this was lost or disappeared into bank accounts that we had never heard of—maybe in Venezuela, maybe in the Cayman Islands, maybe elsewhere. But a lot of time was spent on this.

We were negotiating with the banks in Guyana, for example. The banks could not legally release information to us on this, but enough of us knew enough people in the community to know what questions to ask and where to go to look, so we did some stuff there.

This was now November, through November into early December. By mid December the Embassy went off its 24 hour a day shift and things began to get back to normal, or as normal as they could with all these things. The records from People's Temple began to come back—that the FBI shipped back. We had them locked up in the Embassy to return to the Guyanese government as we had agreed to do. They had all been indexed by the FBI. I couldn't begin to go through all these things, but I did go through a lot of it. I spent a lot of evenings there reading through it. Obviously my main personal concern was could/should I have done something to prevent this. What should the Embassy have done that it had not done?

Library of Congress

Q: This is the continuation of our talk. You were going through the files to see whether there had been clues you had missed or someone in the Embassy may have missed...

DWYER: This was an incredible mass of material. I mentioned earlier that apparently Jones had set up a rule that when anybody of the People's Temple talked with someone outside, not one but three reports were made of the conversation. I found papers, for example, that a number of people whose names I had come to know had signed alleging that they had performed illegal acts or something. Apparently this was a means of control at the People's Temple. It would get people to confess to, or for all I know, make up illegal things that they had done.

Q: You were mentioning the incest accusation which was a fairly common, I mean appeared more often than might statistically be accepted in rejecting parents.

DWYER: No, I don't think so. I can only recall Maria Catorus with that particular one. There was a statement there of Grace Stone's who was the mother of the child whose paternity had been in question, where Jim Jones or her husband had been the father of this child. She maintained that her husband was gay and made other allegations against him. She said that Jim Jones was in fact the father of her child, etc.

Q: But did you find anything that would have led anyone to understand what this White Night exercise was really about and that it was really a danger?

DWYER: Well, by this time the young woman whose name slips my mind, who had gone back to the United States in the middle of summer had pretty much made all these accusations to the press, so they were indeed known. I guess our principal problem was that there were accusations of this type from both sides. And who do you believe? The concerned relatives had put out a brochure alleging a lot of things, for example, that we knew were not true. That the whole Jonestown complex was fenced in by barbed wire and patrolled by guards. Well, you could see that there was no fence. But the fact of the

Library of Congress

matter was that they really didn't need it. There were all kinds of allegations that there were automatic weapons up there. In fact, the FBI recovered some 30 weapons and they were the usual type of thing that you might find in any type of these farm households that had moved to People's Temple. They were shotguns and 22s and maybe a 03 or two, a few pistols, Saturday night specials and things like that. Yet again, that was all that was necessary. They had no need for automatic weapons or much else either, given the control they had there.

What developed was a pattern of elaborate duplicity which became apparent when you read over these things. There was a series of letter that were written to creditors in the United States. They handled this very nicely. Apparently when the people came to Guyana they were possibly told to just forget about any outstanding bills they might have in the United States or they acted on their own and just didn't pay outstanding bills. There were letters from Sears, Roebuck; payments for cars, etc. People's Temple simply wrote them back thanking them for the letter to Mr. so-and-so and stating that he was no longer a member of the People's Temple and had returned to the United States and his last address was such and such.

So, we got a good idea of the incredible organization of this thing. There were also reports of meetings. Every meeting at the Embassy had been fully reported by two or three people. Meetings with the Ambassador, with me, with the consular section. As I said earlier they did quite a credible job at least with the one or two I saw that dealt with me directly. They were pretty accurate as to what I had said. These were meetings not only dealing directly with Embassy people but also with third persons such as the Guyanese Ambassador to Washington who had been shackled up with one of these people.

Q: Coming back—I'm trying to chop you down a bit because of time constraints—how did you feel after going through this? Did you feel that you should have known?

Library of Congress

DWYER: No, definitely not. What we thought might come to pass was that the People's Temple might well disintegrate itself, in which case we would have a terrific problem of getting people back. The big question always came back to the fact did these people in Jonestown kill themselves and commit suicide or were they forced to do so? Obviously under any criteria of any common law, children can't commit suicide voluntarily, so there is no question that the children were murdered. And they were murdered by their parents and their relatives. But on balance I am still convinced that the great majority of these people did in fact kill themselves. There were only one or two there, including Jim Jones, with bullet wounds. Some had injections of cyanide, but there was no way of telling whether these injections had been forced or not. Also they had swallowed cyanide as well in many cases. So you didn't know whether these had been injections to hurry on what they had already started or what have you. And I was struck a year or two later by an article in the New York Times Magazine that reported on a woman who very much regretted that she had not been there. She had been in the United States for some reason but she still regretted that she had not been there to take her own life with her colleagues.

So I think my personal thing, my biggest mental anguish came from the children. These were children I had watched playing and had played with just hours before they were to be killed by their parents.

As to what we could have done—what got lost in the shuffle to some extent was how very carefully under the Ambassador's instructions the Embassy had tried to maintain a proper neutral approach to the whole thing. There had been, before my arrival there, an American Women's Club and the People's Temple had thought this was a good access to the Embassy apparently and sent a whole bunch of women over there to join it. This wasn't quite what the American Women's Club of the Embassy was suppose to be and so in fact the Ambassador had dissolved it rather than get into confrontation as to which American women could belong to it. On another occasion the Marine Guards were approached by the People's Temple saying let's have some activities together. Let's have a baseball

Library of Congress

game or something. The Ambassador put his foot down immediately and said in no way would they have anything to do with these people.

The People's Temple came to us one time, I don't remember while I was there or not, I think it was, and complained to us that they were being subjected to unreasonable search and harassment at customs. The consular officer at a staff meeting said he didn't know what was going on there but there was no question that all of a sudden everything was being searched. Mind you these people would come from the United States with everything they owned, with their whole household effects, short of the furniture. It was like you went down to your basement and cleaned everything out—tools, the spare parts of stuff you hadn't needed—and it all arrived. Dick McCoy our consular officer said he didn't know why this was the case but maybe he should go down to customs to see if he could help them out. The Ambassador said he would not do any such thing. This is a Guyanese law. Interestingly enough what the Embassy didn't know at that time was that the Guyanese authorities had been alerted by Interpol that there had been rumors of illegal shipments coming in. Nobody thought to tell the Embassy this. But this was, we learned later, the reason for the Guyanese search of all this stuff, which I might add turned up nothing.

On the other side we had the concerned relatives and those who hadn't written us saying you know I want my child back, why can't the Embassy get my child back for me? In most of these cases the children were either of age or had their legal guardians with them at Jonestown.

We also recovered the guest book that people were asked to sign at Jonestown—including myself, I might add. Fortunately I had been wary enough to say that I had had a very interesting day in my visit to them in the spring. But there were many people there including some parents of Jonestown young adults who had written absolutely glowing reports of this paradise in the jungle.

Library of Congress

We had talked about Jonestown shortly after I had made my first visit there. We had sent a telegram into the Department saying that as nearly as we could tell Jonestown was a state within a state and the Guyanese law did not seem to apply there. And we suggested that the Embassy be permitted to go in and make demarche to the Guyanese government that they should more accurately monitor what was going on there. The Department had sent us back something that said no we think that would be interference in Guyanese affairs. The Embassy was criticized for this subsequently for not following this up and insisting on it. It had been our original telegram marked for the Assistant Secretary and that of Consular Affairs, both of whom may have said they never saw it, just routinely answered...

Q: But that would have been standard practice. I speak as a retired consular officer. You keep your hands off these things.

DWYER: Well, that is true. And we were told simply later that we were just looking for a way to cover our ass, which I am still indignant about. But in fact, we simply did not have the authority, or the facility for that matter, to make an investigation of American citizens. It was against our law.

As for the tragedy itself, and Congressman Ryan. The other official member of the party, Jim Scholart, asked me before we went up there, whether I thought there was any danger to the congressman. I said I didn't think so. We had gone up there several times and we had had no problems. I said if the congressman has a modicum of good sense, you know is not standing up and denouncing these people or Jim Jones, which of course he did not do, I didn't see any reason why this should be any different from any other trip. There are literally dozens of things that could have changed what happened. If we couldn't have gotten the airplane we couldn't have gone. If Jones had remained adamant in his position that we could not come in, the congressman would have had a nice little press session at the airport showing him futilely knocking at the gates, and we probably would have gotten back in the airplane and gone home. If we didn't have all the press and the television cameras maybe that would have made a difference. But needless to say I agonized over

Library of Congress

these things, not for days, but for months and even years. But I finally convinced myself that there was no single thing that the Embassy should have done, or that I should have done. There were many things that we could have done that would have changed it but only in hindsight.

Q: Looking back on this, what happened to both you and to John Burke as a result of this. Without going into the details, because this is in the press and in the congressional hearings, what was the reaction in the long term of the Department for you and John Burke over this—supportive, non-supportive?

DWYER: Well, I can't be sure what effect these things have on a promotion panel as against other factors. I stayed on in Georgetown. John Burke left the following spring or so and I was Charg# again for a few months until the next man came along. Maybe I should have gone back to Washington to shout a little bit on my own behalf. I am not sure that would have done anything or not, but perhaps.

We had two investigations. One an internal one from the Department of State where we had two senior officers come down and interview everyone and make a report. The conclusion of their report was that all junior officers should have psychiatric training so that they would be able to recognize these things. That was irritating. The other was a House Foreign Affairs Committee team that came down there—four or five of them. I made a mistake there because they talked to me 8 or 10 hours solid and I wished now I had broken it up into 4 or 5 hour segments. I would have perhaps been more alert to it, but you know basically I had nothing to hide. That report was sealed and I don't know whether it is out yet or not.

As far as to what happened subsequently, the Department mailed down to me by surface mail a little plaque, a little brown piece of wood with a little strip of metal, award for valor on it, not quite mounted squarely, which I thought was kind of typical.

Library of Congress

John Burke went back to one or two jobs including Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration for the program of reviewing history. I will let John speak for himself, but from my own estimation of his capabilities and how well he conducted himself in Georgetown, I suspect that he would have gone on to more senior things had it not been for Jonestown.

I heard almost nothing from the America Republics Bureau, ARA, except a very nice letter from the Assistant Secretary that accompanied my little plaque eight or nine months later. When it came time to move on, my wife said she wanted to go somewhere nice, please. We had been through Africa, Syria, and Bulgaria. My wife said she had never been to a post where she could go to a grocery store. So I said okay it will be your choice this time. Actually we went to Martinique which happened to be one of the most popular posts around for officers of my grade at that time.

Q: So this was in a way a recognition...

DWYER: I would say it was more like a nice handshake, goodbye. What effect this has on promotion panels, who knows. I had the problem of coming to the senior threshold when it was terribly crowded with people looking to be promoted. I suspect all things being equal that if I were being considered for a promotion or an assignment along with another guy and we were exactly the same, the fact that I had been there in charge of a congressional delegation that I brought back in body bags with 900 odd Americans dead, was not going to do my career any good, obviously.

Q: You stayed in Martinique how long?

DWYER: We stayed in Martinique for three years. All this time I was commuting to San Francisco for Larry Layton's trial. The Department by that time had simply washed their hands of me and of Jonestown—couldn't give a damn about what was happening. Layton went through two trials. Part of the defense in his first trial was again the CIA thing. The

Library of Congress

judge excused the jury from the court room, but permitted the press to stay and allowed the defense council to make the same accusation that had been made in the press and of course I was immediately mobbed by the press outside and neither confirmed nor denied. I asked for and received specific instructions from the Department as to what I was to say, but it was like pulling teeth. The second trial, the first one was a hung jury, a year later—I might add that there was nobody from the Department at this trial and I was still rather naive. I was concerned about the reputation of the Department. I was personally concerned about my own reputation and that of the Embassy, but I was equally concerned about the Department. Before the second trial I wrote two letters to the Legal Advisor saying I was going out there and this time if I get asked the question about CIA and what have you I was simply going to say nope and I want you to be aware of that. Do you have any comments on that? I received no reply at all. Finally the day before I went out there I sent a registered letter and said this is what I am going to say. If you people have any problem with this let me know. I got out to San Francisco and finally something came in by fax from the Legal Department very apologetic and in effect saying they had no objection under these conditions for Dwyer to say that, but the damn thing never came up.

What happens, as you well know, in the Department, people change assignments every two or three years. Within a period of two or three years this was ancient history and there was nobody around who remembered it. There was nobody around who cared, except those of us directly concerned. So you certainly felt that anything to be done to protect one's reputation should be done by one's self, don't depend upon the United States government or the Department of State to do it because their interests are not the same as your own.

In effect, I think I came out reasonably well. I was urged by several friends, including a lawyer or two, to sue a few of these guys for libel. But that was the last thing I wanted—to prolong this thing. After seven or eight years I was beginning to think that there was nothing left of this but a box of papers that I haven't had the heart to go through sitting in

Library of Congress

my basement—maybe we will forget about it. Yet somehow one way or another it always comes up.

Q: We have been on this a major part of the interview, but at the same time we hit a lot of the other parts of your career. I might just add a little footnote on this. Just after the Jonestown thing, of course, all of us in the Foreign Service trade, particularly those of us in the consular business, were immediately buzzing about this thing. I got a telegram from the consul general in Seoul, Korea saying "I want you to find out what the Unification Church of Reverend Moon is doing." This was because it was one of these cult outfits which had multiple marriages and all sorts of things and was big in the United States and they wanted to make sure that all of a sudden these so-called moonies, who were mostly Korean, I mean there weren't really any Americans in Korea, but they wanted to cover their tail to make sure there was not going to be a mass suicide of moonies. I think we went over, kicked a few tires and slammed a few doors, but there wasn't anything to it. But this was happening all over.

DWYER: Well and there were a couple of cases in which there was in fact some concern. There was one colony in the Caribbean, where a charismatic leader and all sorts of strange things was going on. There was another one in Brazil run by a German that was equally weird. But there wasn't anything around that had a thousand Americans.

Q: This was in a way, at least historically, about the end of the major commune movements.

DWYER: No, not at all. Ironically the next major one was to feature as a bit player Congressman Ryan's daughter. And that was the Bogwan out west where the commune eventually broke up. The Bogwan, the guy with the 36 Rolls Royces and what have you.

Q: Antelope Valley, I think.

Library of Congress

DWYER: Yes, that's right. A very devoted follower of his was one of Congressman Ryan's daughters. The Ryan family had been awarded a reasonably substantial sum from the People's Temple. I think the daughters got \$30,000 or \$50,000 a piece, or something like that. I remember thinking at the time—Jim Jones you just bought the Bogwan half a new Rolls Royce. But there we were again and this was a case where Ryan's two daughters were on television on one of the late night talk shows debating this. I can't remember the names now, but the one daughter has been very active against cults and this was a conversation with her sister who was a member of this cult. She was obviously terribly frustrated. She could not communicate with her sister. This emotionally effected me because this was just the kind of people we were dealing with in Guyana. To think that the daughter of this man who had been murdered down there when asked one time—and quoted in the press—if the Bogwan had told her to murder someone what would you do, had said that she hoped she would have the strength to carry out the Bogwan's instructions.

I just have a hard time going back and looking at the Embassy operations there and of these things. That even if we had decided as an Embassy to crusade against these people irrespective of their rights as American citizens, if we had tried to do whatever we could to encourage these people to come back to the United States, or something, I don't see that there was a great deal that we could have done, and who knows ...

Q: Plus the fact that you would have gotten no support from Washington or the legal people and you would have been...

DWYER: There comes a time in any Foreign Service career that if you stick around long enough you have got to do what you think is right, irrespective of support or nonsupport.

Q: At the same time you have to think about the effectiveness. You can do what you think may be right, but will it be effective?

Library of Congress

DWYER: Well, yes. Can you accomplish anything at all? But there were such simple things to do. Had I not sat on my administrative officer's rear end and told him to get out and find me airplanes, he probably wouldn't have come up with one and that would have been that right there. The congressman and his aide were anxious to get down to another Caribbean island for the weekend and I don't think they would have stood around any longer.

Q: Well, Dick, did you retire from Martinique?

DWYER: Well, I spent three years in Martinique, a delightful place. Martinique has consular jurisdiction over Guadeloupe, and French Guiana plus their dependent islands so it is an enormous consular district. And it was a nice post because I reported directly to Washington rather than to Embassy Paris. It was under ARA. So I had my own little post.

Q: You retired when?

DWYER: I came back and retired about six months later in the spring of '84. By this time the handwriting was on the wall and I knew I was going to have to retire. One nice thing about the last few months in the Foreign Service, if somebody else is paying you you get all kinds of jobs offered you. So I went into Caribbean Affairs which is a large office in ARA—I mean 14 tiny countries or so. I was deputy director and acting director of that for almost the last nine months. It was a good catharsis because I learned a few things. I was not about to become an elderly desk officer once again. I had a call from a guy named Constantine Menges, who was new in the White House. We had been trying to get our prime ministers in to see the President in an order that had been very carefully selected in Caribbean Affairs. I got a call from this guy who was new over there, he was later to become somewhat better known because of his relations with Ollie North. Constantine said that they had agreed to recommend to the President to let the Prime Minister of Antigua call on him. I said, "Antigua?" What it was was that we had a political ambassador in Barbados who covered Antigua. You know the old Foreign Service saying, "Every

Library of Congress

ambassador gets three bites.” Well this was one of his bites. He had called up his political cronies in the White House and asked as a favor to him personally whether they could get him in to see the President, so he did. This guy calls up, I think, on Friday afternoon and said he needed briefing papers, etc., etc. because the guy was going to come in in a week, or something, and he wanted them in his office by the next morning, Saturday. I said, “Sorry, Constantine, my Antigua desk officer is on leave, we have a Grenada crisis [I might add that in between this I went down and served as Charg# at Antigua for a couple of weeks during the Grenada crisis because they needed someone more senior down there. The guy who was Charg# wasn't there because his father had died. So I went down.] Anyway, the Grenada thing was still being wrapped up. I said that there was no way I could get the information by Saturday, but would see what I could do about Tuesday morning. He said, “Do you know who this is?” I said, “I know who this is, I just can't spell your last name.” He spelled it out and said, “I want it by tomorrow morning.” I said, “You are not going to get it tomorrow morning.” As a young desk officer I would have worked all night somehow to do this. But there was no reason for this little thing to get over there on Saturday morning. The next week I went and picked up the Prime Minister and we went over to the White House. The briefing papers that we finally did were largely there as written and everything went well. But I decided that I was too old and too mean to be going around with these bureaucrats.

And you know we had these little crisis. We had another one, there was a guy who manufactured spectacles in Texas and a heavy contributor to the Republican Party. He had been promised an embassy. So they were going to give him Belize. Well, Belize is not exactly the pearl of the Antilles. Belize looked over his record and said we won't have him. So then they said you have to find somewhere else. So they are going to send him to Guyana. And the Guyanese were just dragging their feet on this thing. And, as any Foreign Service Officer knows, the political appointments are handled by the Presidential Staff in the Department—these are political, the Agr#ment Channel telegrams are not widely distributed, etc. So anyway, it became obvious that they really didn't want the guy but they

Library of Congress

didn't want to say no just out of politeness. I was bugging our Embassy in Guyana to go in and talk to Rashly Taxson who is the Foreign Minister. Just get informal word that if they are not going to take this guy let us know—no formal reply to our note is necessary, just say no. So that is what they did. The Embassy sent it back through the Agreement Channel and I thought this was all settled. A couple of months later this guy out in Texas called and said, "What is happening? I have sold everything and we are ready to go to Guyana." Nobody had told him. He ended up in Africa replacing a good career officer, a friend of mine.

Q: Dick, I am noticing the tape and I am going to call this off now.

DWYER: Well, that is fine. It is just about time for me. I can get a haircut.

Q: Okay. Well, I thank you very much. This has been fascinating.

End of interview